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STUDIES IN ARCADY

To

THE LADY EDWARD CECIL

STUDIES IN ARCADY

AND OTHER ESSAYS FROM A COUNTRY PARSONAGE

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BY

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I

STUDIES IN ARCADY

THE LITERATURE OF THE PEOPLE

It is easy for the superior person to frame an indictment of the literature which finds favour in the eyes of either the lower or lower-middle class. From the point of view of 'culture' it is impossible to imagine, for instance, anything more depressing than the songs sung by the men and their wives at a Harvest Home supper in one of the southern counties. Occasionally one hears a genuine bit of old folk-song, like the song which describes the meeting in the ale-house of the blacksmith, the mason, the tinker and the rest. But by far the greater part of the songs, taken from cheap broad-sheets, are marked by an anæmic, lugubrious sentimentality and by nothing else. They deal with corpses, 'pore mothers,' and plaster sufferers (rather than saints) of all

sorts. There is in them nothing legendary or traditional, no point of contact with any large order of things. There is no fun, no laughter, no devil—nothing but floods of tears. The popular music-hall songs would be infinitely preferable. I remember a chauffeur, who had penetrated to one of these entertainments, at its close complaining of the character of the songs, and saying, 'I like "The Man that broke the Bank at Monte Carlo" and all these 'ere old folk-songs.'

It must be borne in mind that ever since the sixteenth century literature in England has been the luxury of a few. The brilliant literature of a class, appealing to an intellectual aristocracy with refinements of feeling and audacities of speculation unknown to the many, took the place of the old ballads and simple things dealing with the great human realities, and of the literature of the traditional Christianity, so profoundly rooted in the popular mind. Simplicity is the first requisite of a literature that is to be really popular. When the best that is written ceases to be simple and generally intelligible, and the traditional framework of life is destroyed, the inarticulate mass

grope by themselves for what they want, with such results as we see.

What the people really want in a book or a song is the life they know, the feelings and desires with which they are familiar, seen on a larger stage and amid more splendid surroundings. The language of the 'penny dreadful' (to them 'penny beautiful,' 'penny awful'), if sadly limited, is yet lucid. In this respect it often forms a pleasing contrast to the contorted, unnatural English of more pretentious writers. Personally I often find the involved, lamp-smelling plots of some of our most esteemed novelists difficult to unravel and follow. An agricultural labourer, if he ever attempted them, must find them not so much difficult as impossible. Before I knew better I used to lend books like Stanley Weyman's *House of the Wolf* to farm-lads laid up with a broken leg. I was cured of this by the blank look of disappointment on the face of a boy who had asked for something to read, and who had been endeavouring to wile away the impracticable hours with this particular book. Consider the amount of knowledge of European history, geography, languages and religion which is needed to

really enter into and enjoy a book of this kind! These *parvuli* do not possess the necessary equipment for the understanding of writers like Stanley Weyman, Maurice Hewlett, or Rudyard Kipling. The works of such authors needed to be accompanied by a 'Vocabolario' like Dante (and a 'Commentary' as well) if they are to be of any use to the poor. An Anglo-Indian lady once explained to me that a 'padre sahib' meant a clergyman, but such kind interpreters are not always at hand. The poor read for recreation—they read when they are tired. I have sometimes before now found myself at the end of a long Sunday with nothing to read, and have tried to grapple with Anton Tchekoff's Russian Stories with the aid of a dictionary, and I know what it is like. Add to the difficulty of the language the other difficulty already referred to, the frequent abstruseness of the plots. I confess that I for one found it very difficult to make much of Mr. Kipling's *Traffics and Discoveries*.. *Huck Finn* is perhaps the best book (with any claim to be called 'literature') to lend to a country lad who is ill. But the lad must be intelligent. They are not at all intelligent

(to say the least), but they all from time to time want something to read.

Personally I would give a deal of modern literature for a single Border ballad, and therefore I feel that if the poor prefer what is simple to what is involved and obscure, it is not for me to blame them. They do not want to break their teeth over a hard stone before getting at the kernel of desired sweetness. It is so natural, so instinctive a want, the longing for a little colour, a little brightness, some glimpse of a larger and more passionate life. 'I must have a little love,' a cottage woman will say, as she takes up the latest number of her weekly periodical with its latest instalment of the precious romance. The poor delight in the descriptions of scenes of high-born luxury and leisure contained in these books, as they delight in the pictorial representation on an almanac, say, of two Italian lovers under a trellis by a table loaded with fruit and wine. They take, indeed, at all times an unselfish pleasure in the spectacle of wealth. They envy one another; they never envy the rich. They delight that these last should revel in life's good things, any slight portion of which they often grudge to members of their own class.

It seems churlish to wish to substitute something improving and educational for the solace they derive from the vision of a great and splendid world, seen in the magic mirror of the penny dreadful. This last is written in a language which they understand. 'As the Earl strode into the room, Lady Gladys swooned'—on such a tide as this the mind is borne on easily and simply into the desired haven of forgetfulness and repose. In this way, I think it is possible to defend even the popular Sunday newspapers. There is no doubt something very repulsive to the educated mind in their accumulated details of sordid and gruesome crime. But, after all, they are the Greek tragedies, the Strauss operas, of the poor. Here for them is the 'pity and terror,' the sense of destiny and awfulness, which an intellectual élite finds in antique choruses. Some of the Greek plays are almost insupportably dreadful, the mythological stories are in themselves, as a matter of plain fact, often repulsive and grotesque, but there is always a redeeming sense of largeness, and this the poor find amid the horrors of the Sunday newspaper. They are taken away from the small worries and privations of their own daily lives, as they

follow the details of some sensational crime in New York, or gaze on the image of a murder done in Vienna.

Newspapers of a higher type are sometimes appreciated. I remember an old man who spent the evening of his days sitting in a country railway station, and reading the *Manchester Guardian* from morning to night. Judging from his conversation, he appeared to live for the greater glory of his favourite organ. 'The editor won't admit no nonsense into that there paper,' he would say sternly. 'He has his own reporters everywhere. What we reads in that there paper is as near the truth as we shall ever get in this life!'

Talking of newspapers, I think it but the barest justice to mention one which has an extraordinary popularity among what one may call the peasant class, the class of small working farmers, immediately above the day labourers, in remote rural districts in all parts of England. I refer to the *Christian Herald*, so long edited by the well-known prophet, the Rev. William Baxter. Its perusal is an immense pleasure and solace to numbers of them. The very name *Christian Herald* calls up to my mind long tramps through the rain of February-fill-dyke or

in grey March weather to some lonely farm-house amid fields with patches of half-melted snow still lying about them. The good folks have perhaps just come back from market, the man is busy taking out the pony, the woman getting tea. On the table with its cracked teapot and bread and butter and cold bacon, amid the other purchases lies the new number of the *Christian Herald.* How often in the cottages has one gone up-stairs to see an invalid, and the first object that has caught one's eye in the dreary little bedroom has been the well-known paper with its front page depicting the rescuing fireman or escaping nun! It is the true *livre de chevet* of the more serious-minded poor. It is to them in a measure what the miracle plays were to the mediæval populace. It gives them the 'wonder which we feel' at hearing of 'a world ransomed or destroyed.' It is thrilling to hear, shown by strongest proofs of Holy Writ, that, say, on March 8, 1905, the cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples, the great globe itself, yea, all that it inherit, shall dissolve; and, like an unsubstantial pageant faded, leave not a wrack behind. In the early centuries the same kind of

pleasure appears to have been given by the elaborate systems of the Gnostics to their adherents. It was no kind of objection to these systems that they were only constantly changing hypotheses. What was required was elaboration, symmetry, completeness. All this the *Christian Herald* supplies to its vast army of readers by its eschatological speculations, with their chain of texts and calculations. I have by me a book written in 1880, describing the course of some religious movement in America which announced that the end of the world would take place in the year 1847. Throughout the entire work and up to its very last page, those hostile to the movement are described as 'the opponents of the truth,' and 'scoffers walking after their own lusts.' In every copy of the *Christian Herald* there used to be two sermons, one by Mr Spurgeon (one of the greatest of Christian preachers) and one by the pinchbeck American orator, Dr Talmage. A poor woman once told me that she much preferred Dr Talmage's discourses. Mr Spurgeon preached more gospel, but Dr Talmage was so far more high learned. Against such attractions the Anglican parish magazines have little to

offer. On the subject of these last the poor will sometimes speak their minds very freely to the less clerical or more sympathetic of the visiting gentry.

Akin to the demand for the *Christian Herald* is the interest taken in 'Old Moore,' and all kinds of books of predictions and the interpretation of dreams. This, indeed, belongs to unsophisticated human nature. When, after a wearisome journey of interminable days and nights across the steppes, the hero of one of Tchekoff's stories (already referred to) arrives at last at a town and an inn, he asks neither for bath nor barber, bed nor dinner, but for a dream-book, a *sonnteek*, to seek for the interpretation of the dreams he has dreamed on the journey. One finds this intense interest in dreams again and again among the English poor.

Those whom I have called the more serious-minded poor, above all things love solemnity in their reading. They dislike anything savouring of the frivolous, and are perhaps somewhat deficient in a sense of humour.

The more secular-minded poor all like seriousness. What they require is a variety of moving tragical accidents told in very

simple language. A lady known to me called on a cottage woman to ask her to join the Parish Library which she had just started. 'If you're fond o' readin', miss,' she said, 'you would enjoy the novel I'm readin' now. I haven't got half-way through it yet, but there's been three murders already, and the gal's tried to drownd herself twice.'

> Le plus de morts il y a dans le canal
> Le plus ça fait mon affaire.

Our civilisation is mechanical, not personal; it is the civilisation of the gramophone, not of the rhapsodist. There is in England no popular word for a 'poet.' Bards, minstrels, story-tellers, have been for generations unknown to the English countryside. But these, above almost everything, are what the people want. They need the imaginative presentment of what is personal, large, tragic, splendid, of simple and elemental human things. This need, so far as it is met at all, is supplied by the lurid Sunday newspaper and the lugubrious broad-sheet ballad. Superior persons from time to time ridicule what they call the 'morbid' taste of the poor, shown in the character of the literature

preferred by them, and in their habit of visiting cemeteries and attending funerals. But it must be remembered that from first to last they are concerned with realities. They instinctively pause to salute the fighter who has fought the one fight more, the last and the best, and for whom the strange eventful history has ended. They know that for every one of them, however the battle goes from day to day, it must end like this, and so the stress and burden of their own struggle is lightened, and it is with a vague exultation, a quickened sense of human solidarity, that they hear St Pancras' bells and the people mourning around. They want to find this feeling reflected in their literature. It was in the old ballads, but the only reflection of it they can now find is in their dismal broadsheets.

The Sunday newspaper and the penny dreadful cater for the poorest and most ignorant, but the writers, beloved by the lower-middle classes, are equally anathema to the cultured few. One may not oneself be able to read the works of Marie Corelli or Hall Caine, but one cannot but think kindly of writers who give so much genuine

human pleasure. Shop assistants speak affectionately of 'Corelli.' To thousands of our countrymen her *Sorrows of Satan*, her *Barabbas*, and the rest are a perfect 'Divine Comedy.' A plebiscite of the lower-middle classes would put Bulwer Lytton far above Dickens. He has the requisite quality of splendour. Among the women-folk of the class of small working farmers, Augusta Evans Wilson is a great favourite. Emma Jane Worboise is another. Discussing the works of the last-named writer, a good woman of this class said to me one day, 'A story ought to be like a tea-party—it ought to give you something you don't get every day.' She revelled in the scenes in which ladies in low-necked dresses of amber satin sit down to elaborate dinners at three o'clock in the afternoon,

People who read for recreation should surely read what they can understand and enter into, and what gives them pleasure. 'My dear sir,' I was once told by a village school-master, 'the books you now require to read are those of 'Ocking.' His tone was that of one pointing out the field in which the hidden treasure was contained. This was twenty years ago, and I was reminded

of his words the other day when chatting in the twilight with an old gardener and his wife. He was no longer able to work, but in one way and another the old couple managed to get along. He showed me his garden, and the bee-hives, and the big pear-tree covering the south wall of his cottage, the clean-stemmed 'Marie Louise.' There was something homely and familiar, something human and normal, about the old couple, and their talk that was like a healing balm. 'Father likes a bit o' reading after tea,' the old lady said. Their great hold-by was, I believe, the *Sunday Companion* (they belonged to the more strictly respectable poor). 'I always think,' said the old man, 'there's nobody writes like old Mr Hocking.' Let the superior people say what they will, such praise is worth having.

DICTA OF THE POOR

ONE point which should not be overlooked by the apologists of aristocracy and of luxury generally, nor indeed by their assailants, is the unselfish pleasure afforded to the poor by the Platonic contemplation of the splendours of the rich. There are, it is true, among cottage folk, many, I fear the majority, who are so depressed by fate that it is only with great difficulty they can be roused out of their languid apathy into interest in anything but their own too hard struggle; but there are others, Arabian fabulists, Venetian souls, who grow grandiloquent over the sight of far-off magnificence, and even at times attribute something of the same sort to themselves. Splendour is demanded of the great. Over dreary tea-tables, the bringing in of the boar's head

to the sound of trumpets would, I am sure, be dwelt upon with affectionate delight. 'I like to see a peacock brought to table with its plumes outspread,' said one of these belated children of the Renaissance, sitting down to a sad meal of bread and margarine. I do not suggest to the rich that they should fare sumptuously every day from altruistic motives, but truth compels me to say they will be better thought of if they do. 'It's but a poor table they keep: nowt but a few rabbits'—after long years I still hear the contemptuous accent with which the words were spoken; and I remember the scorn expressed for some magnate who had dined off 'cold mutton and a few cheese straws.'

A friend amusingly corroborates from her own experience what I have written on this point. Her story is of two ladies who typically illustrate the professional and the amateur philanthropist. Both were great ladies, the latter one of the most beautiful women of her generation, but while the professional was of an unromantic, practical English type, the amateur was one of those to whom beauty was a necessity. Both lived at home with Velasquez and Vandyke, but the latter lived up to them. The

professional would have been equally happy with an oleograph of Queen Victoria and a photograph of the interior of her parish church. The amateur asked the professional to take her to a workmen's club in the East End of London. On the evening agreed upon she arrived at her friend's house. As the footman threw open the door, what was the surprise of the elder lady (herself in the dowdy garments supposed to be peculiarly appropriate to the performance of good works) to see the entrance of a dazzling apparition in court dress, a tiara upon her head, profusely adorned with priceless family jewels, among them what the Venetians call a vezzo, a hanging necklace of marvellous pearls. 'My dear,' gasped the professional, 'I will take you down there, but I can't promise that you will bring any of that back again.' But the emotion aroused in the breasts of the East Enders was only of delight and the success was a furore.

But to return to my village sheep. Nothing is more striking than the way in which the good things of the earth are assigned to 'the quality' as a kind of natural right. 'The quality are fond of

music,' you will be told. I remember on one occasion partaking at a homely table of a delicious dish of fried Chinese artichokes. 'A very nice dessert for the quality,' the hostess remarked.

'I always get my preserved pineapple and my candied cherries from the Stores,' I was once told by the good woman who 'did' for me, the wife of an agricultural labourer with eighteen shillings a week. She at all times dwelt much on culinary matters. 'I *like* a sweetbread stuck all over with little bits of bacon like an 'edgehog,' she would remark. The Vicar himself is perhaps not altogether insensible to gratifications of this kind, and suffered patiently many things at her hands for the sake of her really excellent cooking. The cooking, by the way, was done on the other side of the road, and carried over to the parson's cottage, where it always arrived piping hot. The procession of the parson's dinner was a sight on January nights, the good soul carrying the food on a tray, preceded by her husband bearing a lantern through tempest, storm, and wind.

Another lover of magnificence and distinction whom I remember was the wife of a

peasant farmer with an acre or two. She had been married before. 'You see, my first husband was a *real* gentleman,' she informed me, 'so of course I feel the difference with Mr Bridger. My first husband used to say, "Now, my dear, all you've got to do is to look pretty." All *he* did was to go round and see the young ladies trying their beautiful boots on their pretty little feet. Mr Bridger—*he's* always at hard work.' Mrs Bridger never left her cottage, which was a marvel of curious and not altogether unpleasing decoration. It was hung with spotless white sheets and tablecloths; sea-shells were everywhere, and from the ceiling hung pots of maidenhair fern. Although five minutes from the railway, she had never been in the train. While her body inhabited the cottage, her spirit dwelt with well-to-do relatives in a perfect cloud-land of splendour. One of her nephews was a clerk in London. 'Of course,' she would say, 'if these grand young gentlemen get to their most beautiful offices by ten o'clock in the morning it's quite sufficient. Mr Bridger now, *he* has to be up every morning by five.' Another relative was an assistant, I think, at Whiteley's. 'If we could be in

London this afternoon,' she would say, her voice rising into a tone of gentle exultation, 'we should see the carriages outside standing three deep, and every customer that entered receiving a lovely Gospel tract.' But the climax of magnificence was reached by another set of connections, the description of the fairy-like splendours of whose dwelling puzzled me for a long time. But one afternoon, as she was expatiating on 'the beautiful white marble tables,' light broke in on my perplexed mind. They kept an ice-cream shop.

I have known in villages adventurous souls who lightly pass the narrow barriers which confine them, and sweep fearlessly through Europe and Asia. One such was dilating to me one day on the glories of travel. 'I would go through all the islands,' she said; 'the Isle of Wight, the Isle of Patmos—I would see them all.' Her imagination had been stirred alike by the advertisements of cheap excursions offered by the London and South Western Railway and by the sonorous cadences of the vision of St John the Divine. Another had heard that a young lady in the neighbourhood was going to South Africa. 'Dear me,' she said, 'she'll have to study European languages.'

But these happy souls are rare. As I said, a listless apathy is much more common. Few have these imaginative escapes from the dull reality of weary and burdened lives. Anything like delight in nature, for instance, is in my experience almost unknown. I remember an old woman whose cottage was immediately beneath a hill from which the view was wonderful. The climb to the summit was the great local excursion, and one day the holiday-makers were coming back before her window with branches of May. 'I suppose in your young days . . .' I began, glancing out of the window. 'I have never been up it,' said the old woman; 'I never felt no desire to.' Talking of this reminds me of a young fellow in the North of England who went on a bicycle tour in the Lake Country. 'No scenery,' was his comment on his return, 'nowt but girt hills.' I remember once, by the way, and once only, meeting a little village lad of about ten with a real love of poetry. 'It says you can hear the grass growing,' he told me one day. Another time I found him reading Shakepeare. I said, 'You can't understand that.' He said, 'No, I can't understand it, but I like to read it.' And then he mouthed out,

as if tasting the words, 'the windy fields of France.' I remembered how I myself at about the same age was haunted by the words—

> In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
> A little ere the mightiest Julius died,
> The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
> Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets.

But there is generally in man, woman, and child a great indifference not only to nature or poetry, but even to such interests as politics. 'Whichever side gets in, it won't make no difference to we,' one so often hears. There is often a feeling of complete inability to grapple with such questions. Only the other day a poor woman asked me to explain to her the meaning of all the talk about Free Trade and Tariff Reform. I endeavoured to put the matter before her as plainly as I could, setting forth impartially the contentions of both parties. She sighed helplessly, and after a moment's pause said, 'Well, let's hope it'll be for the best, whichever way it is.' This sense of their helplessness, of their inability to answer you, must always cause many scruples to the sensitive instructor of the poor. Again, the same woman was in trouble about a dog licence. 'Do you see that it matters so very much

to the world if poor people do keep a dog? she inquired. It matters a great deal to me, by the way, causing me many sleepless nights and maddened days. Every cottager considers it necessary to conform to the atrocious custom of keeping a dog secured by a short chain, which he rarely, if ever, leaves. Father Faber, in a magnificent piece of English, has described the passage of the Angelus over the Christian island; one moment, and the first English bell would not have sounded, then Calais would have told the news to Dover; and so it is with the dogs. The whole island is traversed by the howls of these victims, cottage passing on the news to cottage, and village to village, night and day. The dog licence, I found, was looked upon as a fine.

But there is one thing which never fails to rouse the most lethargic of the poor to animation, and that is the occurrence of some horror in the neighbourhood, or even a threat or expectation of something of the kind. A winter or two ago the governess, who bicycled every day from the station to the big house, was stopped by some unknown youth, who gave her a paper, on which was scrawled, 'This is to let you

know that you are doomed.' Then the most benumbed minds grew animated, and all over the neighbourhood the long pent up stream of talk dashed downward in a cataract. Speculation was rife as to the manner in which the deed would be done, and the hypotheses varied from day to day. My housekeeper had had always some fresh conjecture, some new light on the affair. She expected the worst. 'It'll be done with a dagger,' she declared one day, wide-eyed and open-mouthed, as she brought in my chop.

The love of the marvellous is very deeply rooted. I have found both in the North of England and the South the most unhesitating belief in witchcraft, and have heard circumstantial stories told of horses forbidden to pass a certain point, or women kept captive in an upper room by the power of magic spells. The belief, no doubt, is yielding to the influences of the time. 'Dear me,' said a woman in the north of England, 'I think in former times things used to be far curiouser than what they are now. I remember when we children were afraid to go outside the door for fear of the witch.' But the appetite for the marvellous exists, and feeds eagerly on whatever nutriment it

can find. 'They tell me,' said a villager during the visit of a famous quack doctor to the neighbourhood, 'that a gentleman is going round in a carriage and four healing all manner of diseases.' Dons who take college livings in the country need not apologise for miracles to their rustic audiences. The miraculous is no stumbling-block to them. 'Miracles!' said an old man breaking stones on the road, with whom I used always to have a 'crack,' 'why, everything is miracles that we passes through on this earth.'

One of the charms of talking to the poor is their novel and original use of words. Speaking of witchcraft reminds me of two occasions on which the word superstitious was used in an unexpected sense. The sexton of my north-country parish was bewailing the fact that the Dissenters did not come to church on Good Friday, but worked and treated it as an ordinary day. 'A very superstitious lot I call 'em,' he concluded. The second was a far more sinister misuse of the term. During an outbreak of ringworm I asked my laundress not to wash my things together with the clothes of the children suffering from the complaint. She replied loftily,' Oh! I'm not superstitious.' The same

woman, speaking of a daughter who was sick and required to be fed with delicacies, said, "What I want to know is, why doesn't Mrs Mitford intercede for her?' Meaning, why doesn't Mrs Mitford send her a dinner? The providing of special dishes for this daughter became a sore strain on Mrs Harland's resources. 'If you'll believe me,' she told me one day, 'I got her yesterday for her dinner a pork chop and penn'orth of cough lozenges.' Rose at last refused to partake of the Harlands' food at all, but went at dinner time to the houses of the local gentry, from which she returned carrying something between two plates which she consumed in secret.

One April morning I met Mrs Perkins, and as we were going the same way, we went on together. The world was gay and fresh and delightful. I repeated to myself some lines which I read or repeat for the thousandth time with an ever new excitement and delight:

> For winter's ruins and rains are over,
> And all the season of snows and sins,
> The days dividing lover from lover,
> The light that loses, the night that wins . . .
> And in green underwood and cover,
> Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

'Really,' Mrs Perkins broke in enthusiastically, 'the country looks quite artificial!'

The bachelor parson suffers many things at the hands of domestics, but here too he very often gets a laugh, sometimes at his own expense. On the coldest day of recent years I was crouching over a fire composed literally of straw and feathers. For once I spoke sharply, though usually the mildest of men. 'Mrs Denny, will you bring some coal at once? I am shivering with cold.' 'Ah!' was the reply, 'you has to shiver indoors and out. I can't pick out all the knobs,' she went on. But when I think of Mrs Denny's struggling lot, I want the heart to scold. She is a pattern mother, and the sole interest of her life and topic of her conversation is her children. She has eight of them, and no children of their class could be better cared for. I share a cottage with the Denny family, they living, so to speak, on the Epistle and I on the Gospel side of the house. Sometimes I have gently insinuated to Mrs Denny that raw sausages are indigestible, or that a chicken need not be reduced to ashes before being brought to table. The reply I have got is (*piano*): 'Yes, Mr Gales,' and then (*con brio*), 'Ivy,

she got a clean pinny on,' or, 'No, Mr Gales—Bobby, he fell down twice.' When not descanting on Bobby and Ivy, Ivy and Bobby, her conversation is monosyllabic.

I was once *locum tenens* for three months in a Yorkshire rectory, where I was ministered to by Elizabeth and Maud. Elizabeth was the elder, Maud a little serving-maid. Of my experiences under this *regime* I will only record one instance, which always seems to me an example of unrepining acceptance of one's lot. The absences of Elizabeth were frequent and prolonged. One Sunday morning Maud brought in breakfast. 'You again to-day, Maud?' I said. 'My Sunday out,' said Maud cheerfully. 'Then why aren't you out?' 'Please, when it's my Sunday out, Elizabeth goes out.'

The dicta and scripta of village children in school and at catechism, at confirmation classes and on Sunday school excursions, and at tea-parties, is a subject too wide to enter upon. But perhaps I may close this paper by recording one or two. The following is pathetic. One evening I had the choir boys to tea. It was a villainous little room, but there were books, and a fire, and

quiet, and I remember there was a flying-fish under a glass case. 'If I had five hundred a year,' said Frank, 'I'd come and live in this room.' Five hundred a year, by the way, is often used as a symbol of vast riches. 'If she had five hundred a year, she'd get through it,' a woman in Yorkshire told me, speaking of a very generous and hospitable lady accustomed to live in the great world. But here are some Sunday school stories. 'Why did Lot's wife look back?' I asked one day in the address at the children's service. Up went a little girl's hand. 'Please, she lost her 'at.' Excellent was the reply of another little girl when the class was being questioned on the story of the Prodigal Son. 'Now, were they very glad to see him? What did they do to show how glad they were?' 'They had a party.' The answers are by no means always so edifying. On another occasion I began, 'Now, in every town, almost in every little village, there is a certain very special place——' 'A gas house,' interrupted a small boy breathlessly. In the catechism, by the way, and in the school, if envious fanatics have not turned him out of it, is done the best work the parson ever does.

'Do you know what I thought as I walked home from church last Sunday?' a lad shyly said to me one day. 'What is it, Phil?' 'I thought to myself, "I won't say no more of them wicked words."'

But I do not wish to *meler les genres.* Let me close with the following anecdote. I had taken the choir for a day at the Brighton Aquarium. We had gazed our fill on all that move in the waters, on seals and sea-lions, star-fish and sea-horses, but one boy still was sad. I asked him if there was anything amiss, and he replied, 'I ain't seen ne'er a mermaid.'

MORE DICTA OF THE POOR

IT is very difficult for dwellers in the happy world of knowledge and enjoyment to form any conception of what the life of the country poor is really like. There are few who realise it, or indeed have any chance of doing so. The Squire does not, nor Lady Susan, nor the people at the Rectory, where a dignified Rectory exists. The idea commonly entertained by the upper classes is that the poor lead on a more modest scale the same kind of life that they do themselves, with smaller rooms, shorter holidays, and fewer courses at dinner. The difference, they think, is one of degree, not of kind. Where this pleasant fiction can by no possibility be maintained, it is said to be due to want of 'management.' If the labourers' wives were as 'managers' what Shelley was as a poet,

there might be some chance of this fancy becoming fact. But genius is always the exception.

To know the poor as they are one must live literally among them, with no comfortable veil of illusion and distance between their life and one's own. The person who knows them better than any one else is the country curate who has rooms in a labourer's cottage, detained by the labourer's wife in her particular circle of the Inferno as an unwelcome but profitable guest; or the country vicar who in the mysterious dispensations of the Anglican Establishment is compelled to occupy half of such a cottage as the Presbytery.

The cruelty of their condition is of course very great. I am concerned here, however, not with its causes or remedies, but with its result in their outlook upon life. It is not too much to say that for many of them, especially the women, the outside world does not exist. For many of the more strictly cloistered victims of huge families and fifteen shillings a week the village itself does not exist. Returning one afternoon from a round of parish visiting, I attempted to relate my experiences to the woman who brought

in my tea. I expatiated on the rheumatism of one sufferer, the bronchitis of another, and the wretched state of the cottages, intensifying the misery of both. The sole answer I received from my distraught listener was the remark, 'When I eats a piece of new bread, it allus do give 'Olly the wind.' Sometimes, indeed, a fact related by a Sunday newspaper gains an entrance into such minds, stealing in from the outside world like one long ray thro' the hinge's chink. I remember endeavouring to interest the same woman in the outbreak of the war between Japan and Russia. 'Yes,' was the response—a very listless 'yes'; and then brightening a little, 'And wasn't it awful about that there Miss Palmer?' Ah! that breath from the outside world, how sorely they need it, poor souls! This need, I think, even more than the extra two or three shillings a week, explains the anxiety of many of these captives to take in a lodger into their already crowded homes. A lodger of their own class, yet some one new and different, coming from the great outside, brings a touch of variety and novelty into the wearisome monotony of their days. Remember that it is by no means uncommon for a mother with a young

family scarcely to go outside her door for sixteen or eighteen months together, and then think what a relief the sight of a new face, the sound of a fresh voice must be. This relief is given for a moment even by the coming of the butcher or the baker to the door. These little visits cheer up poor Mrs Denny wonderfully. 'Nice butcher,' or 'Nice baker' she will say, 'I likes 'im.' I have known the fresh face act like a charm. Last year, for instance, after a severe outbreak of the usual February ailments, I wished to have the house disinfected. I have already mentioned the arrangement of the Epistle and Gospel side of the cottage I live in. The proposal was received by Mrs Denny with white-hot indignation, and for several days we all, husband, children, lodger, vicar, were swept round and round like lost souls in the *bufera infernal* of her wrath. But I was firm, and at last the day of sulphur came—*dies iræ, dies illa.* I went out in the morning, and meekly returning at night found the house reeking with the fumigation, and Mrs Denny standing in the doorway wreathed in smiles. The Sanitary Inspector had wrought the miracle, all trouble was washed away in a wave of new impressions, and she stood there

delighted at the discomfiture of her husband amid the fumes.

This eagerness to welcome any new excitement sometimes has very unpleasant consequences, as in the instance I am now going to relate. A penniless lunatic, whom her relatives were on the point of getting into Brookwood, escaped, and took refuge in the Dennys' half of the cottage. As a matter of fact, as the Epistle side was already quite sufficiently crowded, she overflowed into the Gospel side, and was billeted in my spare room. Here she remained for five weeks, saying that she felt she could make her home nowhere else. The already overwrought Mrs Denny waited on her hand and foot, and fed her on the fat of the land. From time to time she made brief excursions into the outer world, saying she thought she would find somewhere else to perch, but she always returned like the dove to the Ark at evening. The Dennys, I think, looked upon her as a kind of albatross, bringing good luck in return for hospitality. The lunatic said she 'considered it most holy to be under the same roof as the clergyman.' She was constant in her attendance at church, and used to say

that the reason she disliked being at Brookwood was that she could not attend to her religion properly while there. She attributed her present escape to her zeal in attending an Ash Wednesday service. This episode led to a rupture of my relations with the Denny family.

There lies often, crushed and hidden, deep down in the most apathetic, Matthew Arnold's 'keen longing for beauty and sweetness,' shown in such traits as a love for flowers. As I have before remarked, the form it most often takes is the delighted dwelling upon the doings of the great, the local gentry, and those more distant and glorified potentates some echo of whose life, death, and miracles is borne by the Press into the remotest village. A royal wedding brings to countless thousands a moment of unselfish pleasure. The love-story of the King and Queen of Spain, for instance, was followed with the keenest sympathy by at anyrate the feminine portion of the whole village public. 'Dear me! she is seeing some life,' was the exclamation called forth by the pictorial representations of the Queen's first bull-fight. The enthusiasm evoked by the wedding burst out anew on the occasion

of the birth of the little prince. 'Fancy,' one woman remarked to me, 'the Pope standing outside the door in his robes, waiting to baptise the child.' No less august a personage could satisfy the rustic sense of what was fitting, and so the Prisoner of the Vatican was transported by the village imagination to Madrid.

The veneration for the 'quality' and corresponding contempt for those not born in the purple is very great. Any want of *savoir faire* on the part of the middle classes is mercilessly criticised. 'See 'em with sparrygrass,' exclaimed the wife of an agricultural labourer with withering sarcasm about her husband's employers at the farm. It seems that the farmer and his wife on the first appearance of the hitherto unknown delicacy had begun at the wrong end. They munched the stalks and threw away the tips, afterwards remarking that 'they didn't reckon nothing o' sparrygrass.' Many of the village women, by the way, have gained some knowledge of *la haute cuisine*, and the ways of the gentry generally, in service in their youth. 'Gentry won't look at a leg o' mutton,' one remarked proudly; 'nothing but the saddle, and that with jelly.' 'I should

like to make an aspeck,' she sighed plaintively on another occasion. Another who had been a servant in a great house used frequently to discourse on the knowledge of the French tongue she had gained in her intercourse with the chef. 'He often used to say "Venez ici,"' she would remark; 'it means, Give us a kiss.'

The liking for the best is very pronounced. 'You'll have to get Jack a bicycle,' I said to Mrs Morris one day, *a propos* of her boy having to walk a long distance to his work. 'Pshaw!' was the reply, 'I likes an 'orse.' When both alike are unattainable, one may as well aspire to a sheep as a lamb. The desire to gild and ornament the hard facts of life to appear refined and civil, however wild and boorish one may be, is, after all, a very human instinct. I know a cottage woman who, in the presence of company, makes her little girl address her as 'My mother dear.' 'Yes, my mother dear,' 'No, my mother dear,' the unfortunate child has to say. In the stricter intimacies of the family circle their intercourse is after this sort: 'Wants some more jam.' 'You sha'n't have no more jam.' 'Wants some more jam.' 'If you say that again I'll break

every bone in your body.' 'Wants some more jam.' 'Take the whole pot.'

Board schools and cheap newspapers have much to answer for in corrupting the language of the poor. At present they speak for the most part a strange bookish jargon. The old proverbial expressions are even transmogrified by them into high-sounding phrases. 'They've got their cottage into *apropos* order,' a woman remarked to me the other day. This, however, is a very felicitous example. 'He commenced with a most beautiful peroration,' said another, descanting with enthusiasm on the oratory of an eloquent preacher who had visited the parish church. Owing to the breakdown of the Denny *menage* it had recently been my lot to re-engage a housekeeper who had formerly officiated in that capacity, but with whom, *per varias causas per tot discrimina rerum*, my relations had become somewhat strained. On re-entering upon her duties the good woman announced that she had just 'had her microscope cast,' and the fortune-teller had told her that she 'would shortly be restored to a friend who would be a friend indeed, if he was properly treated.' There was a certain appropriateness in the

title bestowed by another villager on a German band. She always spoke of them as 'the banditti.' German bands, by the way, are by no means popular in villages. They are disliked as alien, and there is, moreover, a rooted belief in all parts of England that they bring rain. The same good soul combined the greatest kindness to children in practice with the most rigorous severity in theory. On one occasion, the village schoolmaster having been summoned by aggrieved parents for caning their boy, she exclaimed with righteous indignation, 'Is people to be brought before the Majestical Bench for doing their duty in correcting the childer?'

I fear the adoption of grandiose language is no sign of mental enlargement. A Scotch gamekeeper who had travelled from the North to a Surrey village recently created great amusement by speaking of 'England.' 'He calls this 'ere England,' I was told; 'did you ever hear such a way of talking?' All over the country rustics, you will find, never think of themselves as 'English.' They consider themselves *the* people, though in the dim distance there are divergent, abnormal beings, Frenchmen, Rooshans, and Eye-

talians. 'These 'ere Japanezers' have in the last year or two, like some new planet, swum into their ken.

Their ideas of history are very vague and mixed. Nothing, for instance, can shake their unalterable conviction that the ancient Romans were Roman Catholics. A moving description of the martyrdom of St Alban called for the remark, 'Dear me! To think them Catholics should have treated a poor Christian like that.' 'All the best stained glass is of the time of the ancient Romans,' remarked another cottager, travelled and more ambitious than the run. 'I always did hear,' she went on, not altogether without truth, 'that England was never a patch on Rome in the blending of colours.'

I found one day a cottage wall decorated with two parish almanacs, one representing Holman Hunt's 'Light of the World,' the other a German picture of 'The Good Shepherd.' 'Two beautiful pictures of our Saviour,' said the proud exhibitor, 'one with a lantern and the other with a walking-stick.' A woman was examining the well-known German engravings, 'Death as a Friend' and 'Death as an Avenger,' with

a certain languid interest one day in my presence. As she turned away she shook her head incredulously, and murmured 'All surmise.' 'Dear me, I've known all them parables since I was that high,' said an unconscious 'modernist' to the clergyman who attempted to read to her from the Gospel of St John.

The religion of the country poor is for the most part of a very non-committal character. I remember speaking one day to a labourer about the Holy Communion. He declined the invitation, but added cautiously, 'I can't say as I ever saw any harm in such things.'

However, this is too wide and deep a subject to be entered upon at the close of a paper of rambling gossip. The religion, I think, that would appeal to them would be one of funereal solemnity. They feel that religion should be a piece with life, and for them life is dour enough, poor things. They would, no doubt, listen with gloomy satisfaction to a severe Calvinist thundering at them from a three-decker, *infulatus pontifex*, wrapped in a black gown. The Church of the Oxford Movement is too cheerful for them, except on the one per-

mitted exception of the Harvest Festival. Cardinal Newman long ago pointed out that the only article of the Faith to which the mass of the English people give a real assent is the Providence of God. Altogether in accordance with this is the position assigned to the Harvest Festival in the rustic Christian year. I know the scorn poured on this function by my ecclesiastical brethren of the stricter observance, and in theory I am altogether with them. It is no doubt deplorable that at least ten times as many people come to my own church for the Harvest Thanksgiving as on Ascension Day. But I have a little of the milk of human kindness, and I cannot bring myself to sneer at anything which gives so much pleasure and calls up so many good and Christian thoughts. On that one day, at any rate, in rural England the Church performs her normal function of gathering the people together and softening and brightening life. The hymns tell of the people's daily life and work. They speak too of the seed sown in the churchyard, and of the great Harvest, finding out tender places in rough hearts. It is like an English 'Jour des Morts.' The little church, too, overflows with gorgeous colour.

The pumpkins are as big and yellow as those that lie basking in Italian fields, and, bright in the chill sunshine, flaunts on font and screen and Altar the gay bravado of the autumn flowers.

VILLAGE THEOLOGY

It has become the custom in many quarters to speak of the 'lapsed masses.' This somewhat Pharisaical phrase is used to describe the great number of people of the labouring class who, alike in town and country, have wholly or in great part ceased to avail themselves of the ministrations of the Church. It would be interesting to examine how far this 'lapse' extends, to inquire what is the view (if any) of the moral ordering of the world consciously taken by the great and increasing number of people in rural England — with the towns we are not here concerned—who are certainly not communicants, and only very sparing and infrequent worshippers, in their parish churches, and how far this view is definitely Christian. These lines refer only

to those—and their name is legion—upon whom to all outward appearance the hold of the Church is very slight. It must be remembered that since the Reformation the Faith has probably only been held by the country poor with the utmost vagueness. It is impossible to exaggerate the effect produced by the loss of the Crucifix alone, and the substitution for it of books which the people could not read. The Methodist preaching of the Redeemer must have come almost as a novelty to rural England. Every trace of Christianity in phrase and proverb has vanished from popular English speech.

There has never been in England the interest taken in abstract theological questions that there has in Scotland. The Church Catechism is no doubt an admirable document, but it is the last thing in the world to impress itself very vividly on the slow-moving minds of the country poor. It is not emphatic, arresting, incisive. It is not broken up enough. The answers to the questions are much too long. Generations of country children have droned them forth with a sound 'like the murmur of many bees,' and the faintest comprehension of their meaning. They have wearily endeavoured to learn them by heart as an

utterly meaningless rigmarole. To this day the teacher will receive any answer to any question. He will ask, 'How many Sacraments has Christ ordained in His Church?' and will receive from some exceptionally bright and clever child the reply, delivered with the proud consciousness of having got the words all right, 'Bread and wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received.'

From all this has come two things—the utmost vagueness in belief, and at the same time a great attachment to the Church, a reverence for it and its teachings, as a mysterious Something which is of great value, and which it is highly important to maintain. This, I am convinced, is always the case among rustics of all descriptions and opinions when left to themselves. There is no bitterness that is not manufactured. Of course the individual clergyman is subject to a great deal of criticism, but there is no feeling against the institution. Above all, a vaguely defined, unrealised Christianity is looked upon as something which is to be handed on to the children.

Nobody with any experience of rural England could for one moment pretend that secular education would be anything but abhorrent to the mass of village people.

It would outrage all their sentiment, the shy, confused inarticulate tenderness bound up with their dearest memories; the feeling which they have — the most rough and hardened—say, for Christmas, or for the churchyard which holds perhaps a little child's grave. The most 'lapsed' of village reprobates likes to hear his children sing Christmas carols, and will tell you with pride that 'it's what they learnt at the school.' They are, it is true, indifferent as to what precise shade of doctrine is taught, but they wish for the teaching of *a* Christian doctrine, and they much prefer that it should be taught with authority and with the added sanction and prestige given by the presence of the parish clergyman in the school. This may be asserted without any fear of contradiction—when left to themselves it is their instinctive and universal feeling.

People who never enter the church will tell you, 'I hold with sending children to the Church school. I've had nine go to the school, and I ought to know.' The old-fashioned Nonconformists fully shared this view. They looked upon the Catechism not indeed as 'gospel,' and as requiring to be supplemented by the teaching of 'faith'

and 'conversion,' but still as embodying certain permanent and universal elements of doctrine and morals which it was good for everybody to know. The more one sees of country people in all parts of England the stronger grows one's conviction that the forcing of an arid, barren secularism upon them would be the greatest outrage imaginable. They are 'lapsed' in practice, utterly vague in doctrine, but they do not yet think that 'the Hope of the World is a lie.' If it is true, let it be taught, and let the parish clergyman whose business it is see to the teaching of it. Their attitude to the Church generally is that though they make very little use of its ministrations they like it to be there. They like to feel that the clergyman may be called for in an emergency. 'She prayed to Almighty God to relieve her of all her sins' you will perhaps be told of someone who died after an illness of an hour or two; 'of course we know we can all pray to Almighty God for ourselves, but I always think a little help doesn't do any harm.' This is of course the specific doctrine of the *via media*—the midway course between a rigid 'sacerdotalism' and the absolute rejection of it.

The belief in Almighty God is practically the one doctrine of village theology. There may be more or less of Christian colouring —truth compels me to say that there is usually very little. There is surprisingly little spontaneous and instructive reference to Our Lord in the religious talk of the country poor. But Theism of a very anthropomorphic kind they regard as a self-evident truth. Anyone who doubts it seems to them only fit for a lunatic asylum. They indeed believe in the Providence of God. Their one festival is the Harvest Festival. Their great text is that 'while the earth remaineth seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.' The text about the sparrows is a favourite. 'That great Master of ours is providing for the birds,' one of the 'lapsed' once told me as he pointed to the profusion of hips and haws in the hedgerows one freezing day of a hard winter. The simplicity with which they believe this often puts one to shame. 'It stands to sense,' a woman said to me the other day, 'that there's Someone very different to we to keep things goin' as they do—the moon and the stars and the trees

and everything. If anybody says to me, "When you're dead you're done for," I tells 'em "You wait."' This theology of the English poor, with its strong belief in God and duty, and its distant yet respectful attitude to other doctrines, is in reality the theology of the English governing classes. It is precisely the attitude of the conscientious, church-going Anglo-Indian who dislikes missions. The theology of the poor moreover has undergone the same modification as that of their betters. 'There's one thing I shall never believe,' the same woman went on, 'and that is that Almighty God is goin' to put us in a fire and burn us. If anybody has to be burnt, I'm sure it'll be me, and Lord! what a flare I shall make!' This last is surely the instinctive feeling of any sensitive mind.

Though it is true that the Articles of the Creed are not dwelt upon, that they do not apparently colour the people's lives, it would be unjust to assert that they are not held. They are not denied of course; but more than this, I think they are rooted in some subconscious region of the mind. This is often borne in upon one, above all in hearing the people talk about the dead. A cottage

woman was recently telling me about her mother who had lately died, and who had been buried in her husband's grave, not in the village churchyard, but in a town three miles away. 'When father died he was took to Sutton—of course a man like father he didn't never really have no avocation to live in Tilney at all. But there was only room at Sutton for the one grave So we says to mother, "Will you be buried here, or will you have the grave three feet deeper and lay a-top o' father?" She says, "I'll lay a-top o' father."' Something like this one hears again and again, and I am convinced that the underlying thought that suggests it is not only the desire of being near one another in the churchyard, though of course it is that, but also and much more, the wish to be together at the Resurrection. They do not come to church much, these 'lapsed masses,' the classes of whom I write, but they come now and again, and they sometimes hear it sung :—

> On that happy Easter morning,
> All the graves their dead restore,
> Father, brother, sister, mother,
> Meet once more.

THE LABOURER'S LISTLESSNESS

MR G. K. CHESTERTON once discoursed in a column of the *Daily News* on the English shepherd of to-day. He described him as 'a beery, bloated, stunted yokel,' remarking at the same time that 'this is the picture, not of the natural, but of the artificial shepherd.' In a passage as admirable as it is true, he enumerated the artificers who have laboured at the production of this work of art. 'A fastidious aristocracy framed and proportioned that figure; the men who stole the Abbey lands whipped him (literally) into shape; the enclosure of commons enclosed him more and more in an artistic frame; he was long rubbed down and polished by the squires; and the last touch was given to him by the hunger of the 'forties and the far-off madness of the city.'

The true history of the making of the English peasant is here succinctly set forth in half-a-dozen lines of newspaper; and that history should be weighed and pondered by all who consider the finished product. I cannot agree with Mr Chesterton that the peasant of to-day is 'bloated'; that he is 'stunted' is true enough. Neither, in the great majority of cases, can he fairly be described as 'beery.' When this is the case, it often seems his one redeeming virtue, the most human and genial thing about him. The impression that South English rustic life would make on a hasty observer would be that the labourers were a half-witted, brutalised, anæmic horde. This would not be a true impression, but it is the first impression that would strike the observer looking with his own eyes at the facts as they are. A deeper view would come later, but the honest inquirer would begin with this.

'The destruction of the poor is his poverty,' is, if I remember, a text of the Bible. The poverty of the poor is the all-excusing, all-explaining fact which their mentors of the upper classes seem incapable of realising. It happens, for instance, again and again

that a little child is burned to death through playing near the fire in a flannelette night-gown. 'You know the danger,' says the Coroner to the mother, 'why didn't you get a fireguard?' But a fireguard costs at the very least a shilling. The man's earnings are fifteen shillings a week, three of which go every week for rent. A fireguard is one of numberless things which 'better-class' people take for granted, but which have to be bought with shillings and florins and half-crowns. But all the money the man can earn is wanted for bread. In normal cases he has a shilling a week for beer and 'baccy. It is held by many that this shilling should not be spent in this way—that it should be used, say, to buy tooth-brushes for the children. This appears, to say the least, to be asking a great deal of human nature.

The historical retrospect given by Mr Chesterton, and the life they lead at the present day, explains the grudging malignity and bitterness which is ingrained in the whole peasant class. This bitterness is not felt so much against their 'betters,' as against people of their own station, who by some means or other have managed to gain for themselves more of the ease and pleasantness

of life. I remember a cottage woman one summer evening leaning over her garden gate watching the trim figure of a young village girl go by on her bicycle. 'Lord, how I should like to see she fall off,' was the comment I caught as I passed. The girl was a clever dressmaker, who had saved money enough to buy a machine. This is their continual feeling towards one another.

Their necessary absorption in the most contracted routine, and in the wearing, grinding struggle to exist, must be borne in mind by those who are startled by the complete want of imagination which they display, the absolute lack of interest in anything outside the narrow circle of the things amongst which they live and work. I recently endeavoured—much, indeed, against my better judgment, but knowing from long experience that at any rate I could do no harm—to startle some of them from their lethargy by portraying the terrors of the impending German invasion. I did not succeed in creating a ripple of interest in a single mind. My lurid pictures were received with complete indifference. One woman said, 'Oh! indeed,' and immediately entered into a long narration of how the

schoolmaster had refused to give the key to Mrs Portsmouth. A man, apparently thinking that 'the news' was all one subject, and that anything contained in the same newspaper was relevant to the discussion, said that in America a lady had got £2,000 damages from a railway company for an injury to her knee, whereby she was disabled from kneeling at prayers. This was his sole comment on the 'war scare.' It must be borne in mind that War, Europe, Germany, England, are words which convey no meaning to their minds. One has known women whose husbands were in the South African war who had not the least idea that battles were real. The war was looked upon as a sham fight on an immense scale in distant lands.

In matters not immediately connected with their work there is almost no observation of nature among the rustic poor. They will assure you, for instance, that butterflies turn into chrysalises, or tell you that the lanes are lit up with glow-worms on a frosty winter night. Time was when they gave names, like 'Charles's Wain' to the constellations, or called the Milky Way 'the Walsingham Way,' because it lighted pilgrims on their

way to Walsingham. In France the popular name for it was 'la voie de St Jacques,' the way trodden by St James when he went before Charlemagne to lead him to fight against the Moors. It would be almost impossible to-day to find an English farm labourer who distinguishes the Milky Way from the vague mass of stars. I remember a cottage family who found it exquisitely ludicrous that a lady had tried to teach them the constellations.

There are, of course, weak and strong characters among them, those who miserably succumb, and those who by continual fighting 'hold their own.' The long fight goes on with poverty and illness—it is little wonder that when the fighting instinct has so constantly to be exercised, its operations should not be confined to circumstances, but should be extended to persons, to the neighbours or the clergyman. A certain undaunted gaiety, a resolute determination to make the best of things is required if they are not to be altogether submerged in the misery of their lot. This is sometimes found. Squire Osbaldiston, in running over the list of his sons, remembered that 'Archie was hanged.' One of the boys of a numerous family known

to me once spent three months in prison. His mother euphemistically refers to this period as 'when my Jackie was in the Home.'

There are here and there æsthetic stirrings. A woman told the writer that in her youth she had composed a poem which had caused many people to say that 'if she'd studied and give her mind to such things she'd have got on with it as a good many had done.' She recited the poem, which was of interminable length, and consisted of a description of the cottage in which she lived, which was known as 'Horner's Hut.' It had this peculiarity that the second and fourth lines of each verse ended with the same word. Thus the first verse ran :—

> Horner's Hut's a very nice place,
> Surrounded by woods and trees,
> But now it don't look quite the same,
> For the leaves are off the trees.

From internal evidence the poem appears to have been written in November. It was inscribed on a long scroll of paper pinned to the wall of the cottage, and was read and admired by all visitors. The good woman often recited it for her own solace, whilst at work.

There is in England between the rich and the educated on the one hand, and the poor on the other, a great gulf fixed, so that they who would pass from either side cannot. It is very questionable if this gulf has been really crossed, even, say, by the author of *A Poor Man's House*. Mr Galsworthy, in his recent novel *Fraternity*, makes Hilary say to the model, 'Don't talk like that; every woman is a lady.' 'The stolidity of the girl's face, more mocking far than any smile, warned him of the cheapness of this verbiage.' One has sometimes had the same experience in telling country boys that 'every decent lad is a gentleman.'

On the evening of one Easter Sunday I called at a cottage on my way to dinner at a pleasant house. I found the wife sitting miserably over a tiny fire with two listless and unoccupied little boys on their respective stools. Her husband was a carpenter, and she complained sadly of the four days' holiday which he was obliged by his employers to take, during which time there would be no pay. It was then a quarter past seven, and the man himself had gone to bed. 'Tom generally goes to bed after tea,' his wife said. On the bare deal

table there was no sign of food. Half-an-hour afterwards one was having warm and pleasant food of various kinds amid lights and flowers and the gay, careless humour of boys home for the holidays from Cambridge and London. Gerald complained of the antics with which Reggie (aged sixteen months and clad in a red velvet pelisse) had indulged at his christening:—'Why should my christening have been turned into a scene of confusion by Reggie?' he asked. But one could not get the former dreary picture out of one's mind.

The one good and to some extent happy thing in the farm labourers' lives is their work in the open air. One has heard a young farm lad talk of the work of the farm and its varied operations with a fresh, eager interest, as of the one important thing, the one thing that mattered, and was really worth doing. There is no gaiety among the English rustics now, but it is not unpleasing to think of a solemn group of them over their beer in the alehouse, or in the West Country over their brown mugs of cider, repeating the sacred traditional formulæ, the refrains in the pauses of the year, with which, bent and bowed and crippled as they are,

the children of those who for centuries have starved and stolen, they assist at the great drama of summer and winter, seed-time and harvest—the one tenet of their religion, the drama that will not cease till the end of the world.

THE HUMOURS OF PARISH VISITING

THE country clergyman in visiting and talking to the poor has an unrivalled opportunity of gaining an insight into their way of looking at life and at the world. If he is sympathetic and human—as they themselves express it, with 'no pride'—so that they feel they can talk to him freely—he will often be rewarded for his afternoon tramp thro' the parish mud and fog by some quaint and delightful, or perhaps pathetic glimpse into the mental world of his humbler parishioners. I have often regretted that since my Ordination I have not kept a note book of such dicta of the poor, and here throw out the hint to any young clergyman who is 'affable,' that is easy to talk to, and with that sense of contrasts which we call 'humour,' that he should begin

to do so. By so doing he will preserve many treasures which otherwise will be lost.

It is not easy, I suppose, for educated people to form any idea of the vagueness of the rustic mind with regard to the world outside its own immediate surroundings. Board Schools are making a change, and the men in village reading rooms look at illustrated newspapers, but for the female portion of the rural population the rest of the denizens of space and time outside the circle of the local newspaper are included in the all-embracing 'they.' 'Ain't it awful when they cuts their heads off?' will be the comment on an engraving of the execution of Charles I at Whitehall, or a *Daily Mirror* illustration of some contemporary horror in Armenia or the Congo State. I remember being asked in a North Country village—some naval manœuvres were being carried on at the time in the North Sea—'the War is getting very near now, isn't it?' 'The War' was conceived of as a great natural force, always raging over the face of the earth, now in this direction, now in that. There has been more newspaper reading since the South African War, though many of us will sympathise with the good lady who told me,

'I can't feel the same interest in this Japanese War as I did in the South African one, the names are so much harder.' But the outside world is very little realised. The wife of a village builder told me one day that she had a son in Rome. Seeing I suppose that I gave a start of involuntary interest she added in an explanatory tone, 'Oh! I mean Rome in America—not Rome in Paris.' The same lady seeing me speak to some Italian workmen who were for a time employed in the village, and knowing that I came from the South of England said, 'I suppose they talk like that in your part of the country.' 'Their part of the country' became the local term for the unknown land of these aliens. 'Where might you come from?' I was once asked by an old man in the train, far up in the North. I said I came from the South. 'Oh! then you'll know my daughter!' he went on. 'Where does she live?' I asked, and received the reply 'In Manchester.' I have often found that works of fiction are regarded as literal transcripts of fact, though it is sometimes suspected that the story may have been a little embellished in the telling. 'I daresay if the truth were known,' I was once told, 'a little bit of romance goes down

as well as the strict facts.' Print is a very sacred thing to the rustic mind. I have sometimes received the pathetic assurance—perhaps of some miracle of healing wrought by patent medicine—'Well, it's i' print.'

The vagueness with regard to the vast outside world is of course compensated for by an intense interest in local affairs and local people. The doings at the great house, the comings and goings of the family and its guests are a perennial source of interest to the poor, their drama, opera, literature, the daily pre-occupation of their minds. My memory goes back to a village where the lady of the manor was a person of very good intentions and performances, but of a peculiar temperament. The villagers and their pastor smarted, but we had always something to occupy our minds. After Evensong on Ascension Day one year a poor woman told me how much she had enjoyed the sermon. I received her praises with becoming modesty, and she went on, 'It must have cut her.' (By the way I was once told by a parishioner who intended to express a high degree of appreciation, 'I consider your sermons are very far-fetched.') Another villager, commenting on the same lady remarked, 'Dear

me! at the Last Day, when all her carry-off is brought up before her, *word for word*, what a deal there will be before she can get into heaven!' To be just, however, the good lady had her difficulties. Remonstrating one day with the parents of a troublesome member of the choir, she concluded, 'Behaving like this, after all I've spent on him,' and received the unsympathetic reply, 'Ah! you ain't spent on him half what I've spent on him.'

There is a great affection for the Parish Church felt even by those who never enter it, and above all for the Parish Churchyard. This is indeed a sacred place. I remember a country publican, kindliest of souls, saying to me indignantly, speaking of the proposal to transfer his outlying hamlet to another Parish, 'Why, people here have got little children lying in the Churchyard.' 'Always look upon me as a staunch Churchman' the same man told me on my first visit, 'I never goes to any other place of worship.' He was in fact a total abstainer from worship of any kind. On another occasion, speaking of the liberal party he said comprehensively 'Ah! sir, they means no good neither to you nor to me.' The rustic inn had been turned by the zeal of reformers into a temperance

hotel, scantily patronised, if truth must be told. 'They've took away my living,' he often said. 'The only thing I've got on my conscience' he told me once, 'is that I've been a vast deal too good to a parcel of people.' He was indeed the most soft-hearted of pagans, God rest his soul!

Another inhabitant of the same village invariably spoke of herself in the third person as 'Mrs Pattison.' 'Mrs Pattison is going for a little stroll,' she would say, as you met her in the village street. I fear this 'little stroll' ended often in the nearest public-house. This weakness had neither injured her health nor spoiled her enjoyment of life. 'Mrs Pattison has lived sixty years in Layton, and isn't tired of it yet,' she told me the first time I saw her. On this occasion, I remember, I found her engaged in the charitable occupation of giving food and drink to a tramp. Hastily pushing him to the door to welcome me, she exclaimed in tragical accents, 'The poor are hungering to death.' She always gave me the most genial of welcomes, and poured out a stream of affectionate enquiries, punctuated by deep curtsies. 'At all the grand dinner parties, at all the garden parties for miles round,' she in-

formed me, 'the conversation is always about Mrs Pattison. "*Have* you seen Mrs Pattison? *How* is Mrs Pattison?"' She belonged to an older generation which attached great importance to doing no manner of work on the Sabbath Day. Michael sits in the corner reading his book — Mrs Pattison walks across the room on tiptoe—if she makes the least noise whilst she's peeling the potatoes, he looks up and says 'Whist, the Sabbath Day!' Otherwise she made little profession of religion. She pointed once with a mysterious gesture to a sacred picture hanging on the wall, and in an awe-struck whisper uttered the enigmatic words, 'Mrs Pattison will not climb—she would fear to fall.' The last time I saw her was in Richmond workhouse. The joie de vivre flamed up in her as brightly as ever. 'The Countess has called on Mrs Pattison,' she said, 'and her Ladyship has sent her a letter out of Ireland.'

In the grey monotony of the lives of the poor, it is the most genial and expansive, I think, the kindliest natures who are the predestined victims of drink. Drink is so often the adventure of the artistic temperament seeking a brighter and kinder world.

'Drunkard,' is perhaps too harsh a term for another old woman, this time in a South Country parish, who was certainly too fond of her cups. In spite of everything, her husband had retained his first affection for her, and apart from the wife's fondness for drink, they were as decent an old couple as one can well imagine. Late at night he would go out and patiently look for her and like a good shepherd, bring her home. One summer evening I met the pair coming along steadily and quietly in the twilight. I stopped to speak to the worthy old people, and to enquire after their daughter who was ill. But alas! no sooner did they stop, than the old lady fell to the ground, from which all her husband's efforts to raise her were in vain. 'I was so overcome by the clergyman speaking to me that sudden,' she explained from her recumbent position. On another occasion—I hope no reader of these anecdotes will suspect me of making light of drunkenness—she fell on a spitoon in a public-house, and split her skull. The version of the incident she gave me was as follows: 'I went to the Circus, and when I saw the elephants come prancing in, I was that alarmed I fell and knocked my head

against one of them circus poles.' I once found the old lady in bed, literally sick with grief. She and her husband had gone on a long-expected four days' holiday to their native village in Berkshire. But everything was changed, the old faces were all gone, and the only surviving relative had spoken to them thro' a partially opened door, and had not asked them in. 'I was that hurt,' she said, 'that I sickened. We tarried there the four days, and then we came home, and I took to my bed.' 'They reckons I'm a very wicked woman,' said another village tippler, 'but what does the clergyman tell us? There's a recommendation for all of us.' This I think was a translation into the vernacular of one of the Comfortable Words.

In the Middle Ages the conscious sharing in a world-wide tradition bound the local to the universal life, and thro' art and ritual the minds of the poor were familiarised with the facts of the Christian faith. By our own poor I fear these facts are very dimly realised. I have been shown a picture of the Nativity with the flute-playing angels and the shepherds bringing their lamb, and have been told that it was 'Moses when he was a baby.'

Moses at all times occupies an enormous place in their spiritual world. On the other hand I have had a picture of Moses as a centenarian with a long white beard, and the two tables of stone in his hands pointed out to me as 'Our Saviour.' A poor woman once read the inscription 'The Assumption of the Virgin' underneath a picture, adding tenatively 'I suppose she's assuming that her child.' . . . Talking of pictures reminds me that I once noticed Sir Joshua's cherubs upon a cottage wall, and made some remark about them. 'Pish!' was the reply 'if there was such things!' I feebly expostulated and the good woman went on, 'Do you mean to tell me that them there things could live in the water?'

On the other hand one is sometimes startled by the evidence of a very naïve faith. Only the other day a mother told me she had been feeding her baby on some preparation called 'Manna.' 'It ought to do him good,' she added pathetically, 'you see it's what the angels lives on.' Less sincere was the remark of the mistress of the North Country inn I have before mentioned when one night the servant rushed in hysterically declaring that she had seen

a ghost in white in the churchyard. 'Dear me! Annie, don't make such a clash,' was Mrs Thornley's comment; 'it will have been an angel or something of that kind.' 'I can't abide no clash,' was the abiding principle of this good woman's life. To statements and proposals of the most opposite kind she invariably replied 'Certainly,' 'Quite right,' 'Decidedly so.' The most trifling domestic details would be discussed in this fashion: 'Annie, come in at the back door.' 'D—n, can't the gal come in at the front door?' 'You're quite right, Henry. Annie, come in at the front door. Better so.'

The human spirit needs an ideal world, and sometimes draws consolation from the most unexpected sources. A poor little old maid, a little above the labouring class, had been telling me one day with tears in her eyes the story of all the troubles of her life. She was one of those pathetic figures who have spent their whole lives and ruined their own health in waiting upon a succession of invalids, and withal was very devout. She paused, and I waited respectfully, expecting a Sacred reference. She then added, 'Look at Cinderella! see what *she* had to go through! see what they did to *her*!'

The following is a touching instance of a soul drawing comfort from the Christian well. A widow of nearly eighty was in great trouble. Her daughter was in the Lunatic Asylum, although, as she believed, perfectly sane, and she could not get her out. It worried her night and day. She had never known a trouble like it, she told me. The drunkenness of her husband, his ill-treatment of her, his death leaving her with a family of young children, all were shadows in comparison. 'The only thing that gives me any comfort,' she added, 'is thinking of the Virgin Mary when her Son was on the Cross. Just as she saw her Son suffer, and could not help Him—so I've got to see my daughter suffer, and cannot help her.' This was one of the very few mystics it has been my lot to meet among the English poor. Hardly deserving of the title was the woman, who on my speaking to her about attending church, readily replied, 'I assure you God isn't out of my thoughts for five minutes together.'

The Puritan, I mean the Puritan of the seventeenth century, the contemporary of Bunyan and kindred spirit with him, is occasionally to be met with. In my remote

village I used to read to a bed-ridden or rather chair-ridden old woman, gently and acquiescingly devout, but far more vitally interested in the life around her, and the doings of the sublunary world, and apt to turn with a sigh of relief to enquiries as to whether it was really true that the schoolmistress was engaged, and the like, and to linger lovingly upon these themes. 'A very nice young laywoman,' by the way was her description of the schoolmistress. The prayers and readings were something of an ordeal when the invalid's husband was present, a man whose face was a survival, and revealed to me in a flash what the men of the Commonwealth were like. He would expound the Word with terrible earnestness. His wife would cough anxiously and glance timidly at him. 'Remember,' he would say sternly, 'it's a serious thing to burn in everlasting fire.'

This is the place to record a specimen of rustic reasoning which is too good to lose. A village barber was telling me with great gusto how he had refuted an atheist. I enquired what arguments he had employed. 'I asked him what portion of the Scriptures he based his ideas upon.' 'What did he say

to *that*?' 'Never a word.' The defeat had been crushing and final.

Set forms of speech are very dear to the poor. I have known a telegram sent by a wife to her husband in the hospital with a broken leg couched in the following terms: 'My dear husband, I hope this will find you well as it leaves me. So no more at present from your affectionate wife Mrs East.' Mrs East invariably commenced her begging letters with the formula 'I humbly crave.' 'I humbly crave a little bit of mutton.' Talking of begging I was asked for port wine for a baby dying of fits. One drop of alcohol would have finished the poor little thing. 'It goes so beautiful and soft down their poor little throats,' said the child's grandmother.

The idea of respectability, of holding one's head up, is very strong, and takes sometimes very unneighbourly forms. Indeed that ancient idea of calling together the neighbours to rejoice over any piece of good fortune is the very last that would cross the English rustic mind. 'I keeps myself to myself—I goes among none of 'em,' one so often hears. 'She never went into nobody's house but her own,' is the highest eulogium

that can be pronounced. Class distinctions are visible to their eyes where we see none. 'Do you see much of your neighbour, Mrs Langford?' I asked of Mrs Cuff. Both women lived in the same row of brick cottages, their husbands were employed on the same work, and received the same wages. Mrs Cuff drew herself up with great dignity. 'I consider Mrs Langford's all very well in her position, and I'm all very well in mine.' 'She screeches to drownd her thoughts' was the contemptuous comment of conscious superiority upon a noisy neighbour.

The one exception to this unneighbourliness is a funeral. Especially in the North of England, a funeral is the theme of an intense and absorbing interest. It is the great fête of the poor—their Corpus Christi and their Assumption. How well I remember the 'bidding' of the whole village to the funeral feast by special messengers, the sitting down to meat of the whole population by relays, the ham, the muffins, the cream, the subdued and decorous joviality that prevailed, the invitations of the waiters to 'reach to,' and the passing of the guests after they had fed into an inner room, where the widow lay on a sofa in her crape to

receive their condolences. 'I goes to the funeral of every man, woman, and child in Broughton,' a woman told me once, 'and then I thinks they'll have no excuse if they don't come to mine. I intend to have an oak coffin, three mourning coaches, and a set down meal before they leaves the house.'

I must bring to a close these rambling glimpses into many minds. One last story, illustrating the attitude, not devoid of patience and cheerfulness, with which the aged poor in cheerless cottages, in remote villages, await what is to come upon them. An old couple on the brink of seeking their last refuge in the workhouse were discussing at tea-time the ups and downs, principally downs, of their life. The old man had lost here a finger, there an eye. 'I think I've been in the wars all my life,' he said. His wife cut in across the table with a breezy vivacity which made the teacups rattle, 'Yes, and now you're in the Battle of Waterloo.'

THRIFT ON FIFTEEN SHILLINGS A WEEK

THE idea that the distress of the agricultural labouring class is caused by thriftlessness and extravagance, especially in the matter of drink is widely entertained and sedulously propagated by their employers and by the upper classes generally. In the South of England an agricultural labourer earns from fifteen to eighteen shillings a week. You may hear the extravagance and thriftlessness of the fifteen shilling a week poor deplored at luncheons which begin with 'langouste à l'Américaine' and end with 'soufflé au Grand Mariner.' Without the drink, you will be told, they would be quite well off, there really would be no poverty at all. The labouring man's wife is a deplorable person, with no idea of management. The ever-

lasting joint which she sets before her husband and children is the most wasteful form of cookery possible. The farmer and his wife, not over an aristocratic luncheon, but over their mid-day dinner of good roast beef and green peas, equally depict the labourer's home life as a scene of riotous extravagance. You will find him, they tell you, sitting down with his family to chops and sausages at the same meal. According to them, a fifteen shilling a week billet, with the wages paid regularly on Friday night, is for a labourer with a wife and young family a 'plum'—a 'grassula,' as Tuscans call a black fat fig. All that the labourer really needs is a greater sense of the blessedness of his lot. The ancients regarded slaves as 'tools,' according to the Aristotelian definition, and the imaginary picture of the happiness of the modern serf is the tribute paid by the modern master to another system of ethics. The curious thing is that this is a tribute which the younger men among the employers are ceasing to feel it necessary to pay. Bismarck, Darwin, Nietsche, Kipling, 'blood and iron,' 'the mailed fist,' Imperialism, 'the struggle for existence,' 'the survival of the fittest,' have all influenced the attitude

of the modern farmer to his men. There are signs of a revival of the 'tool' theory pure and simple. The son of a philanthropist of the old school will admit frankly that it would be to the men's interest to have a Union, and add with engaging candour, 'but their interest is opposed to mine.' There is nothing patriarchal in the present relationship between the farmers and their labourers. I fear the truthful witness can only testify to a growing feeling of conscious hostility between the two classes. I speak only of the South of England. The labourers themselves are ever more depressed and hopeless — the younger men ever more anxious to get away.

If the employer or exploiter of agricultural labour is rapidly becoming simply an 'economic man,' various pious illusions are still cherished by philanthropists, teetotalers and every species of earnest workers among the poor. When poor old people who have brought up large families on eighteen, fifteen, sometimes even ten shillings a week, put in from the long storm to the last haven of the workhouse, they are assured that it must have been drink and drink alone which

brought them there, that had it not been for the indulgence of this diseased craving they might easily have saved enough to secure a serene and affluent old age, and the Guardians of the Poor often mark their sense of this depravity by refusing to allow them a glass of beer with their dinner on Christmas Day. 'We cannot supply you,' they say, 'at the expense of the rate-payers with what has brought you here.'

Nothing can dispel these illusions but living in close contact with the labourer, under the same roof with him, and seeing his life as it is. I, who write these lines, *moi qui vous parle*, have spent twelve years in a crowded labourer's cottage, myself occupying one half of the house, the labourer, his wife and family of eight children and a lodger inhabiting the other. 'Ask any of my men for change for half a sovereign, and he'll pull it out of his pocket for you in a minute,' the well-to-do farmer would tell me. 'Why, there isn't bread after Tuesday,' the labourer's wife would say, and from ocular demonstration I knew very well which statement was in accordance with fact. I knew that there could not and ought not to be change for a sixpence much less half

a sovereign after Tuesday, if the bare necessities of life were to be not only bought, but paid for. Quite frankly the preaching of thrift to people in these circumstances seems to me little short of a crime. Personally I cannot regard with much sympathy the preaching of total abstinence to them. It is quite obvious that in the vast majority of cases the amount which can be spent on beer out of fifteen shillings a week is perfectly insignificant. On the other hand the very moderate use of it which is all that is possible to these farm labourers makes for health and cheerfulness by enabling them to forget for an hour the wretched conditions of their life.

There is indeed one piece of economy which the poor might practise with altogether beneficial results. In the purchase of patent medicines within the limits of what is possible to them, their extravagance is quite reckless. This of course tells its own sad tale of sufferings brought on by toil and hardships and an insufficiency of good and nourishing food. With a credulity which no disappointment shakes, they turn to the quacks for relief. To many readers it will appear flat

blasphemy, but it is my honest conviction that if the money at present wasted by the poor on patent medicines was spent on wholesome malt liquor the change would be altogether to the good.

The cruel gospel of thrift is sometimes put into practice with the most deplorable results. I have known a labouring man and his wife who, out of their absurd and wretched pittance, put away golden sovereigns from time to time. They had, somewhere hidden away, a little treasure hoard. None of the family had enough to eat, but the real victim was the wife and mother who was literally half starved. We were distressed, but not surprised when her weak and ill-nourished brain gave way, and she was taken away from her small crowd of babies to the Lunatic Asylum. Fortunately, 'thrift' is very seldom practised by this class; if it were it would cause far more misery than drunkenness causes at present.

It will no doubt be objected that the fifteen or eighteen shillings a week earned by the man does not represent the whole income of the family. This of course is true. There is for instance a little more earned by work-

ing overtime in summer, tho' against this must be set the loss of the wet days in winter. At the very earliest moment after the longed for release from school, the children begin to earn something. The mother often works in the fields, tho' what is gained in this way is lost over and over again, and from the practice the direst tragedies sometimes result. I remember the case of a woman about to become a mother doing laborious out-door work in the potato field. As the result of this the baby came before its time, and the mother died. The man mopped and fretted for a year in his cheerless and comfortless home, the management of which devolved on a little drudge of twelve, and then one morning hanged himself. With this tragedy drink had nothing whatever to do. One could tell of almost worse horrors by overcrowding. People are being continually led off the track of these things by the temperance red-herring.

The instructors of the poor imagine a fabulous world of management in which the mind of the labourer's wife is not touched by mortal things. Nor is this all, but in this world (more visionary than

any island of the fabulous seas) no unforeseen misfortune ever happens, no unexpected calamity ever falls. In such a world it might be possible to live on fifteen shillings a week, and save money. But in the real world things work out very differently. The following case which came under my notice lately is an illustration of the true facts of the life of the poor. An agricultural labourer, a stockman, working among cattle ninety hours a week, for a wage of eighteen shillings, heard recently that his eldest son, of whom he had had no tidings for two years, was dying in a lodging house in a sea-port town. His wife had before told me that she often heard him crying as they lay awake at night. 'What's the matter?' she would say. 'Nothing, I can't help thinking about things.' 'You're thinking about Sam.' 'I know I am, mother. I can't help wondering if he's got anything to eat.' When he was found the boy had one farthing in his possession. The father arrived too late to see him alive. He paid the doctor, he paid the landlady who had looked after his dying son for a fortnight, he paid six pounds for bringing the body home to be buried. He was absent from

work half a day to do this, and another half day to attend the funeral. At the end of the week his employer, for whom he had worked twelve years, deducted half-a-crown from his wage of eighteen shillings.

The present year has been a sad one for this same family. Ugolino, 'desto inanzi la mattina,' 'awake before the morning,' in the Tower of Famine, heard his children crying for bread. In the early grey of New Year's Day, the labourer above mentioned said to his wife 'I wish you a happy New Year, mother, but I don't think you will have one.' He found he was unable to rise. He had done his last day's work, and before many months was carried to the churchyard.

The cottage mother dreams for years of a haven of rest which she will enter when the children are 'got off.' She withdraws them meanwhile from school on any pretext, and the neighbours write to the Inspector. In school they are being taught, for instance, to say, 'half-pence' instead of 'ha'-pence.' In the days of Charles Lamb or Dickens, by the way, everybody said 'tuppence, thrippence, fowpence, fippence.' In Board School England 'tuppence' only lingers,

doubtless soon to be expelled by 'two-pence.' But the cottage mother has little appreciation for these refinements. 'If I can get Bessie and Nellie off I don't care for nothing,' she will tell you. Her eyes are fixed on a shining future when the children will all be earning, when the youngest has left school behind. 'This is how I means to have it,' I was told one day by the woman who brought me in a tea pot and a muffin, 'as comfortable as possible.' 'It'll be our turn next,' she added with defiant cheerfulness. I said nothing, knowing too well what the 'turn' is often like when it comes.

The well-meaning efforts of philanthropists to help people with fifteen shillings a week, as for instance the provision of a trained nurse, more or less a lady, who has to live in the cottage and be 'done for,' are often a source of great worry and distress to them. The nurse's washing has to be done, and they run in debt to provide better food than usual for her. A woman told me talking of the astonishment of a lady at her unwillingness to have the nurse, 'It's no use Mrs Mitford measuring my corn with her bushel.' This is what the upper classes are always doing.

Some of us complain that the English country poor are ceasing to be Christians. There are those who would wish for them the faith of Brittany or Russia. They have indeed a reverence for Christianity, and they wish it for their children, but their own idea of it (for the most part) is of the vaguest, and they seldom come to church. Under present conditions it is inevitable that they should look upon the clergyman chiefly as a relieving officer. In a village known to me an excellent incumbent of the old school used to drive to church for the one service on Sunday afternoon with a carriage full of sausages and rice which after church were distributed to the congregation. When the rice and sausages ceased the congregation ceased too. 'Church is a thing I never did take no interest in,' said a villager whom it was sought to engage as a bell-ringer at a salary of four pounds a year. ''Course I know, when a man got a little fam'ly, four pound is four pound—but I got my rabbitin' and my ferretin'—my lines and my snares to see to Sunday mornin'.' This indifference is by no means confined to ecclesiastical matters. If the German invasion had taken place, and the fact was borne in

upon their minds that the Germans had landed, and were marching to London, the question they would ask is, 'Will it make it better for poor people?' It is perhaps what they ought to ask.

There is very little of the pagan joy of living about the great majority of them. A dreary lack of vitality is shown by men, women, and children alike. In fact under present conditions it is very difficult for an English agricultural labourer to be either Christian, pagan, or man.

A GOODLY HERITAGE

IT has always been considered something of a scandal that one of the Renaissance Popes —I forget which—should have cried out, 'Since God has given us the Papacy, let us enjoy it.' Yet I hardly know why. The kindly greetings of simple people, made to myself on my presentation to a country rectory, were quite in the 'Godiamo del Papato' vein. 'I hope you'll enjoy the living. I hope you'll enjoy your time amongst us.' Jean Paul, it will be remembered, describes the life of a country parson as a very garden of delights. There are many qualifications of this ideal picture. 'My life is divided into two epochs,' wrote R. S. Hawker, of Morwenstow: 'restless anxiety before the post arrives, and unutterable despair after it has gone.' Of course,

no one is now so isolated as Hawker then was. But, after all, I think it must be said of the country parson who is delivered from poverty, and who is able to take a wide interest in things, that the lines have fallen to him in very pleasant places. For one thing, he has almost unbounded leisure. Many conscientious parish priests endeavour to disguise this undeniable fact from themselves, and exhibit a wearisome semblance of fictitious activity. I have no doubt that Mr Baring-Gould, for instance, performs all the duties of a country clergyman very thoroughly and faithfully, and yet he has had time to write (I believe) more books than any living author. How many books he must have read as well as written, and what good use he has made of them! For instance, one day after we had been singing,

> Crowns and thrones may perish,
> Kingdoms rise and wane,

I came across this passsage in Balmes: 'Los imperios pasen y desaparecen y la Iglesia de Jesucristo durara hasta la consumacion de los siglos; las opiniones sufren cambios y modificaciones, y los augustos dogmas de neustra religion permanecen immutables;

los tronos se levantan ye se hunden, y la piedra sobre la cual Jesucristo edifico su Iglesia atraviesa la corriente de los siglos sin que prevalezca contra ella las puertas del infierno.' Mr Baring-Gould, for one, has known how to make good use of the country parson's immense leisure.

Mr P. H. Ditchfield, the author of *The Parson's Pleasance*, has no scruple in 'enjoying his Papacy,' his study, his garden, his village. He writes under each of these headings. His papers on his books and travels are much like those which the excellent 'Peter Lombard' (another genial and blameless 'enjoyer of the Papacy') used to provide every week for the readers of the *Church Times*. (Since writing these lines I hear with great regret the news of Canon Benham's death.) The chapters on village life are by far the most interesting part of the book, and afford much pleasant matter for gossiping comment. Mr Ditchfield knows his people. He has much to tell us about their ways of thinking, their superstitions, the belief in witchcraft, still so strong beneath the surface, which they are very reticent about, but which they soon reveal to anyone with whom they have once

established sympathetic relations, their still stronger faith in patent medicines. An old lady of eighty-nine, tenaciously living on amid an acute complication of dropsy and asthma, the other day complained to me bitterly of her doctor. Not only did his medicine do her no good, but it prevented her own medicine, which she had taken all her life, from exercising its usual beneficent effects. Talking of witchcraft, Mr Ditchfield says :—

> I have been told of an old witch who lived near Sandhurst. Many carts used to pass the cottage, and sometimes the carters would jeer at the old beldame. But she had her revenge. She could exercise a strange and uncanny influence on their horses, and, if she willed, not a horse could stir a limb. The carters might flog and beat the poor brutes, but they could not budge an inch before the witch removed her spell.

I have heard this very story told, I believe, of this identical witch. The woman who told it me added, calmly, 'I'd never have rested till I'd had her blood.' This does not mean 'murder her,' but 'draw blood from some part of her body.' The belief is that if blood is drawn from a witch, her power to do hurt is destroyed. Again, I have been told of a witch begging at a door, and the

good woman of the cottage shouting a refusal from the top of the stairs, whereupon the witch had forbidden her ever to come down the stairs again, and, try as she would, every time she attempted to take a step forward she fell back, until it pleased the witch to remove the ban from her. Stories of this kind are told all over rural England, and the existence of the power is implicitly believed. Speaking of the belief that an infant suffering from 'convulsive clutchings and restlessness' can only be cured by a drop of sacramental wine, Mr Ditchfield says that this belief 'has not hitherto been recorded among popular superstitions.' Surely it must have been. I have heard of it all my life. I dimly remember hearing, as a child, a story of a woman whose baby was cured by a drop of the consecrated element which she had obtained from a Roman Catholic priest. I do not know—I speak under correction—but I am not sure that such a use of the Sacrament would be considered by the Church as unlawful. The early Church, it must be remembered, communicated infants, as the Eastern Church still does. The practice of infant baptism rests on the idea that

infants 'cannot place any bar' to the reception of its benefits. I have myself been asked for 'a little Sacrament wine' for a baby said to be pining away. Probably those who make these requests do so without any very clear idea of what they mean by them, but the practice seems to spring from an ineradicable instinct. It seems natural to call in some visible intervention from the unseen world for those who can do nothing for themselves, and for whom we can do nothing.

The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth, but the eyes of the villager are fixed steadily on his own village. The author's remarks on this point are very interesting. He says:

> One class of hearers are particularly interested in the results of such researches—the villagers themselves. They appreciate nothing better than an account, however imperfect, of the scenes which took place in their local hamlet. It was my fate a few months ago to deliver a lecture on the history of a neighbouring town, and some of my discourse I considered would be particularly 'dry' to an uneducated hearer, and yet some men walked six miles on a dark evening in winter to hear the lecture, and one of them told me he 'liked this sort of thing very much, and could have gone on listening to it for hours.'

While they care very little for the doings of the great outside world, their interest in any little bit of local history is perfectly inexhaustible. Mr Ditchfield has much to say of the traditions which have been handed down from past generations and are still repeated in the villages. I myself remember, for instance, a turning of the road in a West Surrey village, locally known as 'Kill-Priest Corner.' The tradition was that at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries a monk, escaping from the Priory with the sacred vessels, was set upon by thieves at this spot and killed. The parish clerk is often the repository of a great many traditions and a great deal of local history. By the way, I like Mr Ditchfield's parish clerk, who, speaking of the former vicars he had served under, said: 'I've had a rum lot to break in, I can tell ye.' Nothing can be truer than Mr Ditchfield's remark: 'When history is taught with a special reference to the locality in which they live, it is wonderful how keen an interest they take in it.' I have come to see that the only way to interest country people, or teach them anything, is to begin at home—not to thrust outlandish things and useless book-

learning upon them; above all, not to despise them and their own particular 'little country' and its ways. I remember introducing the *Westminster Gazette* into a north-country village reading-room. Day after day it lay unopened on the table, and at the end of the quarter the members unanimously decided to drop it. They like hearing and reading about people and places they know. Talking of their interest in local history, I cannot resist the temptation to tell a story of a friend who, some little time ago, was appointed to a small, remote parish hidden away in the Wiltshire Downs. His predecessor had held one service weekly on Sunday afternoons. At this service the old man had preached regularly for fifty years, and never once had he failed, in the course of his sermon, to refer to an event which had taken place shortly after his coming to the village. A well-known village character, a certain Peter Green, returning from market in a somewhat 'elevated' condition, had, by some means, got into the river and been drowned. Sunday by Sunday, henceforth, the good man spoke of this, often with tears. 'Peter Green, so lately amongst us,' his rede would run. My friend found that

these references were expected likewise from him, as a necessary part of the Sunday ritual and routine. 'I been to hear 'un three times,' one man complained, 'and he ain't said one word about Peter Green yet.'

Mr Ditchfield tells some good election stories, illustrating the rustic indifference to *la haute politique*. 'Local questions are often more important to the rustic mind than those which relate to the country or the empire.' The following has an old English ring about it:—

> Our late respected member had some curious experiences when canvassing. Calling at the house of a voter, he was met by an old woman, who told him her husband was out. . . . 'Now, my dear, I hopes you be one of them as is for taking the tax off beer. 'Tis shameful how our beer is taxed. There's Wells, our brewer, I told him t'other day, "Wells," I says, "you did ought to be ashamed about your beer. Wells," I says, "I knowed you when you walked about the town, and now you got a carriage and pair, and I tells you how you got it, by waterin' our beer." . . . Bless you, my dear, you shall have the vote. But do stand us a bottle of stout, 'taint Wells's, and it does one ever so much good.'

There is little in the book concerning dialect and old-fashioned phrases. A good

woman is spoken of as suffering from 'population of the heart.' This is a very usual version of 'palpitation.' 'Dishabil,' again, which the author mentions, is good, popular English everywhere, both in town and country. 'I'm all in my dishabil,' I have heard, literally, hundreds of times. 'I made my obedience to 'un,' again, I remember as occurring in the narrations of the poor as long as I remember anything at all.

It is easy to criticise the country clergy, and they have never wanted critics. The late Walter Bagehot spoke of the country parson spending his life in a 'sacred torpidity.' In face of such criticisms it is well to recall a few of the names, taken at random, of some of the parish priests, whose presence and quiet ministrations have for centuries formed a kind of accompaniment to the life of rural England. Think, for instance, of George Herbert at Bemerton, of Herrick at Stoke Prior, of Patrick Brontë at Haworth, of Samuel Wesley at Epworth, of Sidney Smith (I forget where, 'fifty miles from a lemon'), of Charles Kingsley at Eversley, of R. S. Hawker at Morwenstow, of Dean Church at Whatley, of John Keble at Hursley! The English clergy are really

very human people. Mr Ditchfield tells, for instance, a story of a bride rushing to the Rectory on her wedding morning, and announcing that the bridegroom refused to come to church because he had no proper boots. The Rector's boots were all too small, so he sallied forth in quest of a pair. 'Help that thieving rascal to a pair of boots! Not I!' was all he got from Farmer Giles. The young Squire was more sympathetic, and contributed a good substantial pair of yellow hockey boots. This is the kind of thing the country clergy are always doing. I think the sternest critic would agree with the remark once made by a cottage woman to myself: 'A steady-going clergyman is a very nice thing to have in a place.'

PROFESSOR JACK'S 'MAD SHEPHERDS'

It seems fitting that a country parson should write on Professor Jack's book. His shepherds are not parsons, but literal shepherds, as well as farmers, shoemakers, and other characters of rustic life. Mrs Abel, the parson's wife, may indeed be described as a shepherdess — mad, no doubt, in the judgment of many—but still a true shepherdess of the flock. She is a refreshing example of the thoroughly human, unclerical and unconventional lady, sometimes, but all too rarely, to be found in remote country vicarages. It is Mrs Abel who, by her humanity, and sympathy, and originality, penetrates the triple wall of reserve which all peasants build up round themselves, and through whom, in this

delightful book, we see inside the mystical souls of her mad parishioners.

The veil which hides the life of the inarticulate peasant from the outside world has been somewhat lifted for us of late years by writers like Mr Stephen Reynolds and Mr George Bourne. Mr Jack sees further into the life of the rustic poor than even these writers do, because he possesses a religious sense which they lack. They, for instance, report the expression of the peasant's hostility to parsons, and so far, perhaps, they report truly enough; but how much more there is in his attitude to religion than that! The present book might not unfitly be called 'Studies in the Religion of the English Peasant.' In this respect it is most illuminating. The mad shepherds, mystics or atheists, emerge from the dim background of the ordinary life of the country poor, and show Mrs Abel and Mr Jacks their hearts.

The description of that background is most exact and admirable. How well I know the life which is here described! The first thing about it that must strike any observer is its extreme melancholy. Here, for example, is a description of the

songs sung in Farmer Perryman's big barn at the yearly 'Harvest Home':—

> I was struck by the fact that nearly all the songs were of an extremely melancholy nature—the chief objects celebrated by the Muse being withered flowers, little coffins, the corpses of sweethearts, last farewells, and helpless partings on the lonely shore. Tears flow, voices choke, hearts break, children die, lovers prove untrue. It was tragic, and I confess I could have wept myself—not at the songs for they were stupid enough—but to think of the grey, lugubrious life whose keynote was all too truly struck by this melancholy, morbid stuff.

One of these songs, called 'Fallen Leaves,' is thus described:—

> Each verse began 'I saw,' and ended with the refrain:
>
> 'Fallen leaves, fallen leaves,
> With woe untold my bosom heaves,
> Fallen leaves, fallen leaves.'
>
> I saw, said the song, a mixed assortment of decaying glories—among them a pair of lovers on a seat, a Christmas family party, a rose-bush, a railway accident on Bank Holiday, a rake's death-bed, a battle-field, an oak tree in its pride, and the same oak in process of being converted into a coffin for the poet's only friend. All these, and many more, the poet saw, and buried in his fallen leaves, assuring the world that his bosom heaved with woe for every one of them. . . . So it went on. Whatever jocund rebecks may have sounded in the England of long ago, they found no echo in the funereal strains of the Perrymans' feast.

Et ego in Arcadia! I know those funereal ditties very well. How often have I been at the Perrymans' feast! For six mortal hours of an October night I sat yearly for seven years at a kind of high table at the end of the big barn, drinking mineral waters (not liking beer) and listening to these strains. Here were no songs of Touraine, set in a scenery of April shower and sunshine, swallows and poplars, bridges and rivers. Still, the big barn was, as it were, a bridge of Avignon, where all the village world met, not to dance, but to sing and drink in melancholy festivity. As I write I see a drabbled, hard-featured woman rise (after much pressing), announce the title of her song 'Fallen Leaves,' quaver forth her chant, and then when the plaintive anthem has faded, again repeat the title, 'Fallen Leaves,' and once more subside into her place. At this period the farmer did not himself reside in the village. When afterwards, the son, the excellent young Perryman, my friend and subsequent churchwarden, came to live there, a more genial atmosphere prevailed, at least so far as the high table was concerned. 'There's nothin' like a drop o' drink for openin' doors,' as the chief shep-

herd in Mr Jack's book very truly remarks. For the next five Harvest Suppers I looked thro' the gates ajar with perhaps a greater kindliness, but always at the same drab scene.

Those rustics in whom any beginning of literary faculty exists turn instinctively to the churchyard for inspiration. It was but the other day that an old lady of eighty-nine, propped up in the arm-chair she never leaves, told me of a local poet of long years back, and recited specimens of his work. He began rhyming as a lad at the village school, and on receiving from the schoolmaster a present of a Bible, broke out into song on this wise :—

The Holy Writ you gave to me,
The Bible is its name,
I am most grateful for the gift,
And thank you for the same.

Encouragèd by your kind gift,
I dedicate to you
The following lines on William Haines,
Who died not long ago.

Here the metre changed, and the poem proceeded :—

My comrades, listen to my song,
It will not take you very long,
'Tis right to spend a little breath
Upon the subject callèd Death.

The poet afterwards published a volume of poems which attained great local celebrity. Old Mr Roberts, the Rector, read one of them at the Penny Reading. His *chef d'œuvre* had been a 'Prayer to his Mother in Heaven,' some verses of which, lingering in the old lady's memory, she recited. They were of the most depressing character. The poor young fellow had been soon carried off by a galloping consumption. The rustic poor are for the most part naturally melancholy. They expect to weep and sigh during their sojourn *in hac lachrymarum valle*, and seem not altogether displeased that it should be so. It affords them a kind of refreshment, an abundant supply of which, indeed, is ever at hand. Going thro' the vale of misery they use it for a well and the pools are filled with water.

Out of this world of melancholy the characters of Mr Jack's book, Shoemaker Hankin, and Snarley Bob, and Shepherd Toller, emerge. The chief figure in the book is the mystic, Snarley Bob. He throws a startling light on what may be the secret religious thoughts of many among the inarticulate 'lapsed masses.' In considering the religion of the English peasant many things have to be remembered. The

Methodist movement may be looked upon as the origin of the present-day English peasant Christianity. It dates from that, it goes back to that, John Wesley was the true 'apostle' of the English country side. The Oxford movement, (I write as one whose sympathies are altogether with it) has never become popular. In the country districts one is bound to say it has been a disturbing influence. Mr Jack's book contains abundant evidence of this. 'You might as well be in a concert hall,' says Farmer Perryman; 'the place full o' chairs, and smellin' o' varnish enough to make you sick, and a lot o' lads in the chancel dressed up in white gowns, suckin' sweets and chuckin' paper pellets at one another's head all thro' the sermon.' How well I know this scene! I know, too, the uneasy look with which some white-headed old man (too quiet-going and friendly to say much) will watch from his place the dropping of the wax into the padella of the altar candlesticks. Candles at mid-day are the height of absurdity and wicked waste to the rustic mind. 'I think they may be all very well in towns,' a small working farmer once ruefully admitted to me. Farmer Perryman could not be happy

because he missed the smell of damp and dust that came 'from the old tomb' in the unrestored church. The substitution of Mass for the old-fashioned Morning Prayer has been a sore grief and bewilderment to the intensely conservative, slow-moving rustic mind in many places—a grief and bewilderment which may afford us some measure of the greatness of the original outrage when, with the aid of foreign mercenaries, Morning Prayer was substituted for Mass.

It has always seemed to me that Dean Church's 'Village Sermons' show great understanding of what is likely to be acceptable to the old-fashioned serious rustic mind. He is, no doubt, 'Catholic,' but this is never obtruded; indeed, in the technical sense it is hardly perceptible. He deals with the solid serious things which the peasant expects to hear about in Church. Another great Tractarian, Dr Neale, writes sarcastically in his book on *Mediæval Preachers* about finding in the Rector's pew in a country church a time-worn sermon headed, 'On the Vanity and Uncertainty of Human Life.' To the poet with his head full of the bright imagery of Catholic devotion the theme would seem dull and trite enough, but there

is no doubt that this subject, beyond all others, would receive the respectful attention of a village congregation.

This book shows that while it has come about that the English rustic is without the scenery and atmosphere of religion, he sometimes preserves its essence in an astonishing way. To the superficial observer all his thoughts seem limited to material things, bounded by the confines of this mortal life. His talk about 'the Lord seein' him thro'' and the like appears to refer solely to recovery from illness or the care of his family. 'I've got my time over,' he will say at the last, or, if exceptionally cheerful and prosperous, 'I've had my innin's.' 'What's the good o' prayer now?' says Snarley Bob; 'it's all over. It's too late, and I don't want it.' Yet this same Snarley Bob was on terms of intimacy with an Invisible Companion whom he called 'the Shepherd' and 'the Master' which 'go beyond the extremest reaches of authentic mysticism.' I will not spoil this story for the reader by telling it. Anything more extraordinary I have never read, and it has all the air of being a transcript from life. Personally, I do not disbelieve the objective truth of the story. I

remember some words of Dr Whyte about the visions of St Theresa: 'I do not know. He never manifests Himself to me. But He said—If any man love me he will keep my words and I will manifest myself to him.' It must be remembered that the Person to whom these experiences relate lived with shepherds, vine-dressers, fishermen, carpenters; He knew their lives and drew His teachings from their crafts and trades, and promised to be with them all the days. I suspect that among shy, reticent, inarticulate people, shepherds of Bethlehem or fishers of Gennesareth, the sense of this invisible companionship may be much more frequent than is at all supposed. I myself heard last Good Friday something which startled me by the simplicity and naïveté of the faith it displayed. But of these things one must not write. It is at least possible that in what seems the dull under-world of the English peasant, far from the world of those who do and know, the world of Julian, of Leonardo, of Peter the Great, of the achievements of the navigator, and the sculptor, and the aviator, in their hard-faring lives of necessary toil, the poor in spirit may possess the Kingdom of Heaven.

A SUNDAY DINNER TABLE

FOR the last ten years it has been my lot to eat my Sunday mid-day meal amid an extraordinary variety of surroundings. These have ranged from the table of a Cabinet Minister or of a Peer of the Realm to that of an agricultural labourer earning eighteen shillings a week. For this sum he put in weekly ninety hours' work. The labourer's wife 'did' for me, and on those Sundays when I lunched at home, perhaps on an average one in four, to save the trouble of extra cooking on the great day of their Sunday dinner, I walked over the road to their cottage and shared it with them. With regard to the material part of the feast, let it be here set down at once that it was generally excellent, and consisted invariably of either a leg of mutton or an aitch-bone of beef.

I regret that I have not kept some record of these functions, jotting down the table talk I have listened to and taken part in from time to time. This would have formed a history of the family and the parish, with occasional glimpses of the happenings of the great outside world. The family was a somewhat complicated one, a widower with four children having married a widow with two, the pair having become jointly responsible for three more. It was the old story of 'my children,' and 'your children,' and 'our children.' The elements of much entanglement are plainly visible in this situation.

One perennial source of trouble was the persistent iteration by malignant neighbours that the Hebbles were not legally married, and that Mrs Hebble's first husband was likely at any moment to re-appear. For instance on the publication of the banns of Mrs Hebble's daughter the story was set on foot that the Hebbles themselves had at last been asked in Church. It was assumed that news had arrived of the first husband's death, and this was dilated upon with all the irrationality and irresponsiblity of village gossip. This legend was proof

against any amount of evidence, and the flourishing of Mrs Hebbles' marriage lines in the face of all and sundry. The true history was this: The first husband had been a drunken brute who had ill-treated his wife, and at last ran away with another woman—'an actress,' according to Mrs Hebbles' account—leaving her to face the world with two small children. She went to keep house for Hebble, and to look after his babies. There were four at the time, three boys and a little girl who died. On her husband's death, which occurred shortly afterwards, she married him.

The early times of their married life, which for them were times of grinding poverty and cruel hardship, often formed the subject of the Sunday dinner talk. The hardest time in the lives of working people is the time when the children are little, and unable to earn anything for themselves. Hence the keen anxiety that the parents feel for them to leave school at the earliest possible moment. In this case there were six small mouths to feed, and others quickly coming, and it had to be done on twelve shillings a week. 'If you'll believe me,' Mrs Hebble often said seated at her com-

paratively luxurious board, 'many's the Sunday when we've had nothing but swede turnips for our Sunday dinner.' After the birth of the first new baby she had 'fancied a chop,' which Hebble had managed to get for her. As soon as it was put on the table the eldest boy refused his share of the cold and uninviting food prepared for the rest of the family, and cried for it—'wants that, wants what mother got'—and this had quite 'put her off' eating it, and she had given it to him.

When I began dining with the Hebbles, ten years ago, things were much better than this. The wages were better—eighteen shillings a week instead of twelve—and the two first families were out in the world, earning their own living, with the exception of Mrs Hebble's boy, Dick. His being at home was a very sore point with Hebble. He was a good boy, already at work, but he was considered *not* to earn his keep, and was constantly made by his stepfather to feel that his presence was unwelcome. His diminutive size was the subject of constant mockery. If he wanted more dinner he was at once reminded of how much it cost to keep him. If he declined a second helping, he was asked, 'ain't it good enough for ye?'

He usually sat silent, but if he ever ventured a remark it would be met with some such jeer as this, 'Dick's sure to set the cart before the 'orse, if *he* opens *his* mouth.' I never ceased to admire the tact with which Mrs Hebble ignored this painful situation, and tided over the difficulty with an unceasing flow of cheerful conversation—almost always successfully. Once or twice, however, —to be strictly accurate, I think only once— the dinner party was broken up and ended in a scene of general confusion and weeping. 'I'll go and hang myself,' said Hebble. 'Go, go!' rejoined Mrs Hebble, calmly and firmly.

I have rarely felt so sorry for any one as I did for this lad, and it was a great relief to me when he left home, and went to work on the railway. He has done well, and bears no shade of malice for the long persecution he endured at the hands of his stepfather. He saves money, and in any emergency is always ready to help the Hebbles with his savings. The possession of a bank book has transformed him into a hero in Hebble's eyes. He still comes to the Sunday dinners and now takes a cheery and sensible part in the general conversation.

Hebble's treatment of Dick was a curious contrast to his method of dealing with his own two boys. The youngest of these, Bill, would sometimes endeavour to intimidate the public, after the manner of a Socialist leader, by announcing that he was going to fast until he had his way. He would lie on the floor and kick. 'Try a little bit o' fat, Billy,' Hebble would say, 'nice little bit o' brown, or perhaps a little bit o' jam bread.' 'Shan't, won't,' Billy would reply. 'The lad's weak,' Hebble would go on, 'and didn't ought to be spoke to that rough.' But these childish scenes have long been a thing of the past.

Mrs Hebble was, however, the life and soul of the dinner table. She was an excellent raconteuse, and like many women of her class had really seen a great deal of the world. I remember once being told by one who had travelled when in service in her youth, that the finest place of worship she had ever been in was St Peter's at Rome. Mrs Hebble had never been further than Paris, but she had been brought up under the shadow of a great house, where she had come across many members of the aristocracy and sometimes even royalties. She would

now and again introduce a remark in some such way as this, 'As the Queen of Portugal said to me the last time I saw her.' Stories of the splendour of her relatives and their ill-treatment of her personally formed the staple of her talk. Her mother, it seemed, had always been hostile to her, and the old lady's resolve to leave her out of her will was only tempered by her dread of a disturbance at her funeral. 'I do hope, Madge,' she would say, 'you won't come and make any upset at my funeral. With all the ways you have for your money, I'm sure I can't expect you to be able to afford the fare.' 'I shall come if I have to walk there,' was Mrs Hebble's reply. The old lady possesses a 'treasure,' like a Church. The disposal of this among the various claimants was a frequent topic. 'Aunt Nance is to have the silver tea-set,' Mrs Hebble would say, 'and Aunt Bess is to have the silver coffee-service, and of course we all know the oil paintings always did belong to Uncle William.' 'I reckon all this 'ere's true,' Bill, the youngest boy, would gloomily put in, reclining on the sofa. 'You 'old your tongue,' Hebble would say sternly from his armchair. 'But what I want to know,' Mrs Hebble would

proceed, 'is, where is the fish slice, and the grape scissors, and the asparagus tongs?' Included among these riches was a Louis Seize clock;—I use the term 'Louis Seize' at random to indicate the sense of florid gilding and blue enamel that was conveyed to my mind. Mrs Hebble occasionally visited the old lady in the summer, and helped to cook for the visitors who lodged with her. She used to return from these outings in a frame of mind divided between anger and admiration. 'It *is* so nice to get back to a plain leg of mutton,' she would say, 'one does get so tired of mayonnaise and fricassee.'

Again she would tell of splendid but haughty sisters. One is married to a coachman in London with a mint of money in the Bank, who keeps on with his calling, only because it gives him something to do. The amount of his wealth was stated variously, but seven hundred pounds was the sum usually named. 'Dear me, he won't so much as walk down Praed Street, without he puts a top hat on.' One Christmas the Hebbles went to visit the coachman and his wife, and were received but coldly. They were giving a party in the evening,

and exhibited a festive board already spread with the dainties of the feast. 'There was chicken and ham, sandwiches, sausage rolls, almonds and muscatel, whisky, port—but they didn't seem to know that Hebble and me had a mouth.' A hurried meal of cold beef had been partaken of in the kitchen. The one idea of the coachman and his wife appears to have been to get the Hebbles out of the way before the arrival of the invited guests.

There is in Mrs Hebble's recitals the delightfully amusing and non-moral quality of Punch and Judy. It was indeed into an atmosphere of Italian comedy that one was transported on those dull February Sundays when the 'quality' were away. Sometimes she would tell of the desperate deeds of her schooldays—her getting on the roof of the schoolhouse, and dancing whilst the schoolmistress was trying to take a mid-day nap, or her plunging a needle into the poor lady's knee, which set up erysipelis, and caused her to be laid up for seven weeks. Or there would be tales of her days in service—of how she served as kitchen-maid under a cook who gave way to drink, and of her informing her mistress of her proceedings.

'I assure you, my lady, that it's no uncommon occurrence for her to make away with two bottles of brandy whilst cooking and dishing up a dinner.' 'Dear me, dear me,' Lady Maud had remarked. The cook had been dismissed and Mrs Hebble installed in her place. Sometimes she would draw on the experiences of her daughter in service with a pious lady. 'She'll come into the kitchen and say, "The Lord be with you. I can see that cook's in a bad temper this morning. Let's ask God to forgive her her 'asty temper. And a little macaroni cheese. Lift up your hearts." So she'll flounce out again.' Sometimes more immediate neighbours would be spoken of. 'I saw Colonel Mitford's housekeeper last night,' she would say, 'I hollered her down the lane.' Perhaps a flag would be flying from the window of Mrs Hebble's cottage to celebrate the departure of an unpopular neighbour.

A more impersonal note was sometimes sounded. She would relate some fact culled from a newspaper, the discovery of a mummy queen in Egypt, or the price of a pig or a sheep in the thirteenth century. 'I see they've discovered the remains of Queen

Harold the Second,' she would say. 'That great Crusader,' one of the boys would put in, fresh from school. 'She lived two thousand years before Christ,' she would go on, 'dear me, she must have talked with Moses. As soon as I saw it I said "I must tell this to Mr ——, he is so interested in anything of this kind."' Hebble used to listen with a gloomy and querulous satisfaction at the range of his wife's interests and attainments. She is indeed not without some acquaintance with a variety of subjects. One day a curate of the extremely 'advanced' school came to lunch with me, and Mrs Hebble, as she changed the dishes heard him talking of Purgatory and Indulgences, the Pope and the Inquisition, in a manner calculated to make old-fashioned Protestants turn in their graves. She remarked afterwards, 'I could hear from his conversation that that gentleman's very 'igh Church.'

The following fragment of talk illustrates the grimness of the outlook of the labouring poor, the little room which the imperious necessity of getting food leaves for sentimental and humanitarian considerations. The talk was of some deformed baby who had recently been born to two very poor

parents. 'What a pity some one didn't hold their hand over that child's mouth,' Mrs Hebble remarked calmly, 'it wouldn't have taken a minute.' I exclaimed at this. 'What I look at,' put in Hebble, 'is this, who's to keep that there child when it grows up.'

He, poor man, when I left them was ageing rapidly, and his health had not been improved recently by a kick from a beast which broke his arm. But it is a secret grief I think which most preyed upon his mind. 'Played upon his mind' by the way is the turn which the poor always give to this expression. He never spoke of it, but I know how much it troubled him. It was the complete disappearance of his eldest son, his favourite boy, Jack, of whom nothing had been heard for more than two years. He never succeeded in anything, rolled about from one job to another, and finally vanished into space. The step-mother from whom I first heard of this naturally took it more calmly. 'The last time anything was heard of him,' she told me, 'was two years ago at Epsom. He was with a black man—some foreigner he's got linked in with, I suppose,' she added reflectively. She went on to say

that they were bóth 'mortal.' This is an adjective frequently used by the poor. I leave it to the reader to unravel its meaning.

In spite of these shades of trouble, things on the whole, when I left them were going well with the Hebbles. What one admires about them is the gallantry and courage with which they face their hard fight with the world, determined to hold their own and to survive, and the remarkable way in which on the whole they succeed in doing it. On Sunday the olive branches are gathered round their parents' table, now one, now another, a policeman, a gamekeeper, a railway porter, a girl from service, the two young farm lads, all or all but the youngest, bringing their sweethearts with them. The little girl, the only child still at school, on one of these festive occasions, remarked sagely, 'I do think it looks so low not to have a young lady or a young man.' The time-honoured, world old jokes of sweethearting circle round and round. The boys and girls are full of youth's hopefulness and good spirits, glad of life, tenaciously clinging to it, and determined to go on living. The old people are broken and worn with the battle, but still undefeated. The genius of the scene is Mrs Hebble.

She often says there is no one in the world she is ashamed or afraid to look in the face. It is she who has kept the home together amid all sorts of troubles, and amid the cruelly depressing circumstances which are the lot of the English labouring poor. The wonder is that they do not utterly succumb. It is not without admiration that I think of her presiding over her Sunday tea-table, pressing cakes and custards upon all, and with her jests and stories cheering the pilgrims along their dusty way.

II

FOLK-LORE AND TRADITION

THE CHRISTIAN LORE OF ANGELS

In nineteenth century England there was still common an old simple-hearted blessing, said as a prayer by the children of the poor, which I fear has now become altogether extinct. It ran thus:

> Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
> Bless the bed which I lie on,
> Four angels round my bed,
> Two at the foot and two at the head,
> Two to watch, and two to pray,
> And two to carry my soul away.

What a very happy thought for a little child to fall asleep with! How safe the child must have felt. Little princesses, no doubt, once said the words, and closed their eyes with visions of the four bright spirits watching at the four corners of the tester, the *ciel du lit* as the French say. All heaven was

about a little child's bed. The rhyme belongs to the world-old, world-wide lore of angels, of a vast host of spirits of benignant might and power, in league with man, and the messengers and ministers of his Maker's good-will to him. What a picture of the clear-eyed childhood of the world is given us by the words in Genesis, 'And Jacob went on his way, and the Angels of God met him. And Jacob said when he saw them, "This is God's host".' (Gen. xxxii. 1).

We are concerned here only or mainly with the *Christian* tradition of the angels, and not with how that tradition came to be, but only with what it is. Speculation has been very busy with the story of their Creation, and the Fall of a part of them. Among the Rabbis it was much discussed whether they were created on the second day, as being 'winds,' 'spirits,' or on the fifth as being the 'birds of God.' In the Christian Middle Ages it was held that they were created when God said 'Let there be light,' and that those who fell were cast out of heaven when He separated the light from the darkness. It was sometimes said that they were created on Sunday, and fell on Monday. The fact that Monday is the one

day of the seven which is left by the account in Genesis without a blessing, gave rise to a whole world of ingenious comment and speculation, from the Apostles to the Reformation. It was believed that a third part of the angels fell: 'The dragon with his tail drew away a third part of the stars of heaven' (Rev. xii. 2).

The 'nine orders of angels' are reckoned thus: Angels, Archangels, Virtues, Powers, Princedoms, Dominations, Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim. In New College Chapel, Oxford, there is a window with nine figures representing these nine orders or choirs, and a tenth is added with the inscription 'Virgines.' The Golden Legend says, 'All that be chosen be taken to the orders of angels, albeit the Blessed Virgin be above all.' Hence the title 'Regina Angelorum'; and so Adam of St Victor speaks of the 'Regina virginum, transcendens culmen ordinum.'

It throws a great light on the language of the New Testament when we realise how continually these titles are used to denote spirits, evil as well as good. For instance, 'neither Principalities nor Powers shall be able to separate us,' 'above all Principality

and Power and Dominion,' 'the Principalities and Powers in heavenly places,' 'whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities or Powers,' 'Head of all Principality and Power,' 'Angels and Authorities and Powers being made subject unto Him,' 'He shall put down all Rule, and all Authority and Power' (The Epistles, *passim*). The majority of English people hearing or reading these sonorous words, probably regard them merely as rhetorical flourishes, but they were assuredly not so meant by the writers.

Dante shall be our doctor to teach us to distinguish between these spiritual existences, and the forms with which imagination and devotion have clothed them.

> Per questo, la Scrittura condiscende
> A vostra facoltade, e piede e mano
> Attribuisce a Dio, ed altro intende ;
> E santa Chiesa, con aspetto umano
> Gabriel e Michel vi rappresenta,
> E l'altro che Tobia rifece sano.
>
> (*Par.* iv. 46–49)

'For this the Scripture condescends to your poor faculties, and lends hands and feet to God; and Holy Church represents with human faces, Gabriel and Michael, and that other who healed Tobias.' The men of the

Middle Ages were quite clear that the representations so familiar to them were but images and symbols by which a great spiritual reality was rendered accessible to their minds. 'Così parlar conviensi al vostro ingegno,' as Dante so truly says.

The angels in the New Testament are always 'young men in white garments.' The suggestion, above all, is of irresistible strength. 'His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow, and for fear of him the keepers became as dead men' (St. Matthew xxviii. 3-4). In the Psalms they are a 'flame of fire.' There is an echo of this in Shelley's glorious line 'Angels of rain and lightning.' The women-angels of modern Christmas cards, and of the tradesmen's almanacs that hang on cottage walls are 'fond things vainly invented.'

R. S. Hawker, the vicar of Morwenstow, used to assert that 'the angels have no wings, not even a feather.' But this is to be a purist of a very rigorous kind. Dante would have told him that the wings denoted the rapidity of their motion, as of light, through space. Moreover the symbolism of feathers is always good. 'Thou shalt be

safe under his feathers' we read in the Psalms (Ps. xli. 4). The Devil is depicted with wings indeed, but they have no feathers. Dante describes him with

> due grandi ali
> Quanto si convenia a tanto ulcello,
> Vele di mar non vid' io mai cotali ;
> *Non avean penne*, ma di vipistrello
> Eran lor modo . . .
>
> (*Inf.* xxxiv. 46-50)

'He had two great wings, such as befitted such a bird. Never saw I sea-sails so great. They had no feathers, but were like a bat's.' I think the loveliest picture in the world is the Perugino triptych in the National Gallery, of the Madonna and Child with Michael, and Raphael with the boy Tobias. The angels of poets like Spencer and Crashaw are the angels of the Italian pictures. When Spencer describes an angel, he speaks of

> a faire young man
> Of wondrous beauty and of freshest yeares,

and he makes a great point of his wings :

> two sharp winged sheares
> Deckèd with diverse plumes like painted jayes,
> Were fixèd at his back to cut his ayery wayes.

Crashaw in his poem on 'The Glorious Assumption of Our Blessed Lady,' says,

> Go then, go glorious on the golden wings
> Of the bright youth of heaven that sings
> Under so fair a burden,

and describing the Annunciation, he says,

> Heaven's golden-wingèd herald late he saw
> To a poor Galilean virgin sent;
> How low the bright youth bowed, and with what awe
> Immortal flowers to her fair hand present.

In Isaiah's vision the Seraphim has 'each one six wings; with twain he covered his feet; and with twain he covered his face, and with twain he did fly' (Isaiah vi. 1). The ancient liturgies at the Sanctus speak of 'the Cherubim with many eyes, and the Seraphim with six wings.' The reader will remember Shakespeare's phrase, 'the young-eyed Cherubims.' The exactness of the great poet's language in all matters pertaining to the Christian tradition is worthy of note. These are the two highest orders—the Cherubim, the Spirits of knowledge, and the Seraphim, the Spirits of Love. The twofold idea of the angelic office is expressed in the Michaelmas collect—it is to 'do God's service in heaven,' and 'to succour and

defend men on earth.' The first part of this office is performed by all the heavenly host—the second more especially by those who are called 'angels'—that is, messengers. St John the Baptist, by the way, is always depicted with wings in the icons of the Eastern Church, to indicate his office as the Messenger sent before the face of Christ.

As to the worship offered by the angels, it is only necessary to point out the part which the Sanctus plays in the Liturgies of Christendom. The Sanctus-bell rings to call the faithful to join in that unceasing adoration. The angelic worship is elaborately described by the ancient Liturgies. A Syrian Liturgy dilates with Oriental diffuseness on 'the jubilees of Angels, the songs of Archangels, the concerts of Principalities, the dances of Virtues, the lyres of Powers, the voices of Dominations, the clamours of Thrones, the thunders of Cherubim, the swift motion of Seraphim.' Well may the French use the proverbial expression 'être aux anges,' meaning to be in a transport of joy. This is another example of how profoundly the language of the people was affected by the worship and faith of the Church. 'Per Christum

Dominum' goes the Præfatio in the Roman Mass, 'per Quem Majestatem Tuam laudant Angeli, adorant Dominationes, tremunt Potestates.' This illustrates that large and rich theology of the Incarnation, an heirloom from the ancient Church, in which the Eternal Son is the Mediator of angels as of men. 'Through Whom the Powers tremble.' It is a very grave defect that in the English Preface there is no 'through Jesus Christ Our Lord.'

The attendance of the angels at the altar is the continual theme of the Fathers of the Church. When Spencer in his *Epithalamium* truly in no very edifying context, speaks of

> the angels that continually
> About the sacred Altar do remaine,

he expresses one of the most ancient and universal of traditions. The poets are the best of theologians. The idea of angels ministering in the Liturgy is very strong in Russia and the East. In Eastern pictures one sometimes sees the priest carrying the paten and chalice upborne by angels. 'Grant that with our entrance may be the entrance of the holy angels' runs the prayer. The Russian name for the

dalmatic, the vestment of the ministering deacon, is the 'cherubim.' One must not forget the prayer of the Western Mass, that 'these gifts may be carried by the hands of Thy Holy Angel to Thine Altar on high.' But by the 'angels' are more especially meant the spirits whose office it is to minister to man. Over these, according to all tradition, are seven archangels: Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Chamuel, Jophiel and Zadkiel. The names of the angels are always a composition with that of God, ending with the syllable El, and denote the special commission entrusted to each. Michael means 'Who is like to God?' Gabriel, 'the strength of God'; Raphael, 'the healing of God.' These are the only three commemorated by name by the Church.

'Who is like God?' thunders Michael the chief,
Raphael, 'cure of God,' comforteth grief,
And as at Nazareth, prophet of peace,
Gabriel, 'Light of God,' bringeth release.

The Prince of the Heavenly Host is St. Michael.

Sub tutela Michaelis
Pax in terrâ, pax in cœlis

the old hymn says. It is he who fought

with the dragon and cast him out of heaven, and contended with him 'disputing about the body of Moses' (Ep. St Jude, 9), who is said to have made the plagues of Egypt and parted the Red Sea; he is to slay Antichrist on Mount Olivet, and his is that 'voice of the archangel' at which the dead shall rise. He, as the sign-bearer, 'sanctus Michael signifer,' will display at the Judgment the Cross, the Nails, the Spear, and the Crown of Thorns. Gabriel is the messenger par excellence, the bearer of the Great Message at the Annunciation. The Russian name for Lady Day is 'the Glad tidings.'

> Gabriel to Mary went,
> A mighty message bare he,
> Deep in awe the Maiden bent
> To hear the first Hail Mary.

The 'Salutation' was a very common inn-sign in old English, and is still occasionally to be seen. It is to commemorate the Annunciation that the Angelus, the Angel-bell, rings three times a day all over the world. The bell itself was often named 'Gabriel.' How much poorer in the things best worth having is a country where the

Angelus does not ring! Some 'softening gleam' falls on the life of the most motonous village or the most sordid town as the bell once more evokes the scene, and one sees for the thousandth time the Maiden and the Angel in the twilight of Nazareth.

Raphael, the guide of the boy Tobias, is the spirit of joy, the angel of safe returns and happy meetings. Uriel is said to have been the destroyer of the hosts of Sennacherib. He carries a roll and a book, as the interpreter of prophecies. This is probably connected with the early Christian legend that it was he, and not Christ in person, who accompanied the Disciples to Emmaus, and 'opened to them the Scriptures.' One of the titles of our Lord Himself, by the way, is 'Magni Consilii Angelus.' Chamuel, 'he who sees God,' is the angel of Gethsemane, who strengthened the Saviour in the Agony with the assurance of the Resurrection. Jephiel, 'the beauty of God,' is the angel at the gates of Eden with the flaming sword. Zadkiel, whose name for us is hopelessly vulgarised, but which means the 'Righteous of God,' is the angel who stayed the uplifted hand of Abraham, about to smite his son. The

two greatest painters of the world, by the way, were named Raphael and Michael Angelo. 'Angelo,' 'Cerubino,' 'Serafino' are all common Christian names in Italy.

Under the seven archangels are the 'thousands of angels' (Ps. lxviii. 17), the whole host of the ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to man. It was a Pagan as well as a Christian belief that each soul has a guardian spirit, a genius or demon attending upon it. In that most extraordinary book, the *Revelations of Sister Catherine Emmerich*, there is a curious touch which illustrates this. I quote from my own copy, which is a French translation of the German original: 'Lorsque Jésus tomba en faiblesse, Gesmas, le voleur de gauche, dit "Son démon l'a abandonné."' Sometimes it was held that each soul had not only its good angel, but its evil genius. The good angel was held to take up his station on the right hand, the evil on the left. There is a quaint Russian superstition that one should not spit to the right hand, because the good angel is there, but to the left where the demon is. One should also put on one's right shoe first. The Jews held that the evil spirits had power over

all even numbers, hence the saying in all languages, 'there's luck in odd numbers.'

The office which the angel performs for his charge is 'to keep him in all his ways,' and to be a faithful and charitable guide, as Raphael was to Tobias. This was believed to extend to the smallest details of life. One has heard of Catholics praying to the Guardian Angel to wake them at an unusual hour in the morning—a touching example of loving familiarity with the unseen world. The belief in the protection of the angels is strongest in dwellers in mountainous countries, and among sea-coast peoples—for example, in Brittany. Forest churches all over the world are dedicated to them. The Bible represents them as being with man continually, from the beginning to the end of his journey, encamping around his dwelling, bearing him up in their hands. There is no possible circumstance in which they do not stand by him, no deliverance which they do not effect for him. They hasten Lot from the doomed city, saying, 'Arise, lest thou be consumed'; they present the prayers of Tobit and his wife before the Holy One; they carry the soul of Lazarus into Abraham's bosom. The angels of the little children see

always the face of the Father. There is joy in their presence over one poor publican or harlot who repents in some mean Galilean town. From the first page in the Bible to the last we see them ascending and descending upon the sons of men.

In the morning of the world men received angels unawares. Abraham entertained the mysterious Strangers, 'he saw Three, and worshipped but One,' the Golden Legend says, and to this day Russian peasants put up green branches in their houses on Trinity Sunday in memory of the tree under which he received them. There is a wild Rabbinic legend that Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt because she neglected to add salt to the food of the angels who came to be her guests. There are angels of different countries, 'the Prince of Persia,' and 'the Prince of Grecia'; angels that have power over earth and air and water; the 'Prince of Hail,' and the 'Prince of Fire.' This is the meaning of such texts as 'God standeth in the Congregation of Princes' (Ps. lxxxii. 1). The Rabbinic legends elaborate and embroider the stories of the deliverance of Abraham from the oven of Nimrod, and of

the Three Children from the furnace in Babylon—'the furnace and chimney of the Chaldees,' as the Golden Legend says. The angels dispute who is to be the deliverer, and by what means the deliverance is to be wrought.

Something has already been said of the joy of the angels. It is of them that it is said that at the Creation 'the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy' (Job xxxviii. 7). The angelic carols and dances at the Nativity are represented in a thousand pictures. 'When He bringeth the First-Begotten into the world He saith, Let all the Angels of God worship Him' (Heb. i. 6). The express intention of ringing all the bells at the *Gloria in Excelsis* in the Mass of Easter Eve is 'to rejoice with the angels.' The gladness at the Ascension, as is fitting, is more stately and ceremonial, with its chanting of the alternate choirs. 'Tremunt videntes Angeli.' In pictures of the Assumption the note of riotous festivity is again struck. The point is that it is all a joy over man—the ministration of the whole creation to him, and its unselfish gladness at the good reserved for him.

No theologian has spoken of the angels better than the poet Spenser. He says :

And is there care in heaven, and is there love
In heavenly Spirits to such creatures base
That may compassion of our evils move ?
There is ; else much more wretched were the case
Of men than beasts ; but, oh ! the exceeding grace
Of highest God, that loves His creatures so
And all His works with mercy doth embrace,
That blessèd Angels He sends to and fro. . .
How oft do they their silver bowers leave
To come to succour us who succour want.
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant. . .
And all for love, and nothing for reward.
Oh ! why should heavenly God to man have such regard ?

The great point surely is the poet's question, ' Is there care in heaven, and is there love ? ' For those who answer the question as he does, no difficulty is presented by the details of how that care and love are exercised. The stories are legendary, the practices superstitious, the images of the old angel-makers crude and childish. But when the country-people saw among the relics of some great abbey a feather from St Michael's wing, it was to them a visible pledge of the Divine protection. Through the most puerile representations, their minds grasped

the essential fact that in an ineffable manner the message came to Mary, and the mysteries were wrought out into which the many-eyed Cherubim desire to look. The poet asks: 'Why should heavenly God to man have such regard?' The question had been asked ages before in the mystical Psalm, 'When I consider the heavens the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou regardest him?' and the Psalmist himself gives the answer, 'Thou madest him lower than the angels—Thou madest him to struggle, to fail, to suffer, to toil, to die, but even at the first Thou madest him for this, to crown him with the lasting crown of the glory and honour of the Incarnation.'

THE DEVIL IN CHRISTIAN LEGEND AND TRADITION

THERE can be no greater misrepresentation than to describe the mediæval faith as a religion of gloom. The Christians of the Middle Ages dwelt much, it is true, on things which the cheerful Greeks kept out of sight. But the background against which the Greek cheerfulness was displayed was terrible and grim. To them, pain and error, disease and death were fatal and necessary, irrevocable and final. Against them there was no appeal. In these circumstances obviously the only thing to do is to forget them. But the Christian could afford to look at, even to dwell upon, pain and sin and deformity and death, because they were accidental to humanity, no part of the Divine intention, and because their sting had been drawn, and their real power destroyed. The

Faith was a glorious optimism—a vision of man's greatness and of the Good reserved for him.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the traditional Catholic view of the Devil as shown in the writings of the Doctors and Saints of the Church, and in the folklore and legend of all Christian lands. This view exactly reflects the original promise, the words spoken to the serpent: 'it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise its heel.' The Devil is the defeated, powerless enemy, 'the sport and laughter of redeemed man,' the baffled, inefficient spirit, conquered once for all upon the Cross, and continually outwitted by the simplest rustic cunning of Christian men. 'No mediæval poet,' it has been said, 'could have written *Paradise Lost*.' Milton's Satan compels the admiration and sympathy of the reader. Puritanism exaggerated the personality of the Devil, making him a Manichean counterpart of God. Its Satan is almost omnipotent and his immense black shadow falls continually on human things. In a very real sense he has the victory and has bruised man's head; the whole world lies in his grasp, and not only the heathen world of the Apostle, but

the world of redeemed and baptised men. As far as the race is concerned, apart from elect individuals the Incarnation has made no difference. One result of the Reformation in Puritan countries was an enormously increased estimate of the Devil's power. The belief in witchcraft with its attendant cruelties rose to an unheard of height in Calvinist Scotland, and in England during the Commonwealth. The Devil entered into the place left vacant by the loss of so many gracious ministries and heavenly helpers, and from thence ruled over the popular imagination.

The story of the Fall of the Angels according to the traditional Christian view is told in *Piers Plowman*. We are familiar with the ordinary enumeration of the 'nine orders of angels.' But the poet tells us that

> Christ, King of kings made *ten* orders of knighthood,
> Cherubs and seraphs, seven more and one other,
> Majestic and mighty, the more was their bliss
> Over armies of angels, archangels were there;
> Of the Trinity taught the truth to revere,
> Obeying his bidding; He bade them naught else.
> Lucifer with his legions had learnt it in heaven,
> But brake his obedience, abandoned his bliss,
> And fell from that fellowship in a fiend's likeness
> To a deep dark hell to dwell there for ever.

And with him more thousands than man can number,
Leapt out with Lucifer in loathly forms;
Believing in him who in this wise lied,
I will sit also in the sides of the North; I will be like the Most High,' (Isaïah xiv. 18) . . .
Nine days were they falling in likeness of fiends.

The patristic tradition is that a third of the Angels fell thus, and that their vacant places in heaven were to be filled with the sons of men.

Lucifer, the leader of the rebel host, is a creature pre-eminent in brightness and beauty, indeed a Lightbearer, a Son of the Morning. He is called by Dante 'la creatura ch'ebbe il bel sembiante'* and 'colui che fu nobil creato più ch'altra creatura'† the most noble and beautiful being of all the creation of God.

Pride is assigned undeviatingly as the reason of his fall. Again to quote Dante, that mirror of the whole spiritual world of the Middle Ages, 'principio del cader fu il maledetto superbir di colui'‡—'his cursed pride was the beginning of his fall'—and again he describes him as 'colui che volse i spalli a suo Fattore'§ 'he who turned his

* Inf. xxxiv. 18.
† Purg. xii. 25.
‡ Par. xxix. 55.
§ Par. ix. 127.

back upon his Maker.' Shakespeare's 'by that sin fell the angels' is proverbial with us. The whole mediæval tradition would be still alive among his audience in Elizabethan days. As to this maldetto superbir, the reason of his fall, there is a curious legend of the devil making his confession in Cologne Cathedral. He professes to repent his crimes and to be willing to endure a thousand years of penance. 'My son,' says the priest, 'all you need do is bow before the Image of the Crucified, and ask Him for pardon.' 'What,' cries the devil, 'he who swept up the chips for Joseph? he who hung on a gallows?' And he turned on his heel with a curse.

The leader of the heavenly army was of course St Michael, whose very name means 'Who is like to God?' He is described in the New Testament as saying to Satan, 'The Lord rebuke thee.' He is represented as transfixing the dragon with a whole spear; St George in his conflict has a broken one. The angel conquers without scathe or struggle; man conquers but with pain and effort, with the 'bruised heel,' and the broken lance.

The text already quoted, 'I will exalt my

throne above the stars of God, I will ascend into heaven, I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation upon the sides of the North'* which was always applied to Satan has had a curious influence upon traditional custom. The North was looked upon as his especial possession, and so in village churchyards the north side was reserved for suicides. Some readers will remember Mr Housman's simple, direct and vivid verses:

The vane on Hughley steeple
Veers round a far-seen sign,
And there lie Hughley people,
And there lie friends of mine.

To South the headstones cluster,
The sunny mounds are thick,
The dead are more in muster
At Hughley than the quick.

To North, a soon-told number
Chill graves the sexton delves,
And steeple-shadowed slumber
The slayers of themselves.

The second sin of the devil was believed to have been Envy, which was the cause of the fall of Man. 'Di cui invidia tauta pianta' again Dante says; 'for God made not death' the Book of Wisdom tells, 'for God made man to be an image of His own eternity, but

* Isaiah xiv. 13.

through envy of the devil came death into the world, and they that hold of his side do find it.'* The Rabbis always taught that the Fall was caused by the envy of the serpent. The animal typical of the deadly sin of envy is the snake.

Henceforth Satan lives for the ruin of man. He is 'the Enemy.' But He who created man at the first in His own image does not abandon him in the course of his mysterious destiny, but comes to be with him in a new and wonderful way which we call the Incarnation, and by the mysteries of the Passion and Cross, the malice of the devil is for ever rendered impotent. The fathers teach, notably St Ignatius, that the Incarnation was hidden from Satan. The liturgies and hymns of the Church exhaust the language of exultation in describing how 'the ungodly was trapped in the work of his own hands.' The idea is that in bringing about the death of Our Lord, he unwittingly caused the destruction of death and of his own kingdom. They say that he swallowed the bait of the Manhood, and was caught by the hook of the Godhead. 'The Descent into Hell,' 'the Harrowing of Hell' in the sweet old

* Wisdom ii. 2.

English phrase was undoubtedly a part of the original tradition, and was no empty formula, but a very living article of faith in the early and middle Ages. The 'Gospel of Nicodemus' popularised by the Golden Legend describes the triumphant breaking down of the gates of death, and the rage and amazement of Satan when he discovers how he has been deceived:

> Then Satan Prince of Death, said to Hell, 'Make you ready to receive Jesus, which glorified himself to say I am the Son of God, but he is man that dreads the death. . . I have tempted and have moved the people against him, I have made ready the spear, I have mingled the vinegar and gall, I have made ready the tree of the Cross, and anon he shall die, and I shall bring him hither.' Then Hell answered: 'Is not this he that raised Lazarus whom I retained?' And Satan said 'That same is he truly.' And Hell said to Satan, 'I conjure thee by my virtue and thine that thou bring him not hither.' But even as they spake there came the thunder at the gates, 'Lift up your heads, Oh ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.'

Very beautiful and touching is the story of the entrance of the King of Glory into that dark place, and the exclamations of the waiting souls that crowd around Him, Adam and Eve, and David and Isaiah, and Simeon

and St John. The thief comes with Him carrying his cross.

> Anon as Jesus Christ descended into hell the night began to wax clear. And anon the porter black and horrible among them in silence began to murmur, 'Who is he that is so terrible and of clearness so shining? Our master received never none such into hell, nor the world cast never none such into our cavern. This is an assailer and not a debtor, a breaker and a destroyer, no sinner but a despoiler, we see him a judge but no beseecher, he comes to fight and not to be overcome, a caster out, and not here a dweller.'

The Saviour ascends on Ascension Day with 'a great pity,' for the multitude of the ransomed souls whom He has delivered from the jaws of death. Sometimes they are represented as literally emerging from the jaws of a huge dragon.

The old English use of the word 'hell' as it is found in the Creed is worthy of note. It means the unseen, covered place, the abode of the dead. When in popular English speech did 'Hell' come to mean Gehenna? The Latin tongues have only the one word 'Inferno' to express both meanings. So Dante speaks of St John Baptist as 'he who suffered martyrdom,' 'e poi due anni inferno,' that is, the two years from the time of his execution till the

Descent into Hell. Michael Angelo in one of his sonnets speaks of Dante as the man who had seen 'l' Inferno giusto' (the Inferno proper) 'e il pio' (Purgatory).

The reader will pardon me if I illustrate from the words of mediæval writers the reality of their belief in this Triumph of Christ over Death and Hell, and over Satan their representative. These thoughts of the Saints are like meadow-sweet by the waters of Paradise. My first extract shall be from Mother Juliana of Norwich :

> On this showed Our Lord that the Passion of Him is the overcoming of the Fiend. God showed that the Fiend hath now the same malice as he had afore the Incarnation. And as sore he travailleth and as continually he seeth that all souls of salvation escape him, wonderfully by the virtue of Christ's precious Passion. And that is his sorrow, and full evil is he ashamed ; for all that God suffereth him to do turneth for us to joy, and for him to shame and woe. And he hath as much sorrow when God giveth him leave to work as when he worketh not, and that is that he may never do as ill as he would, for his might is all locked in God's hand.

Again she writes :

> Also I saw Our Lord scorn his malice, and set at naught his unmight, and He willeth that we do so. For this sight I laughed mightily, and that made them to laugh that were about me, and their laughing was

a pleasure to me. I thought that I would that all mine-even Christians had seen as I saw, and that they would all laugh with me. But I saw not Christ laugh, for I understood that we may laugh in comforting of ourselves and joying in God for that the devil is overcome. . . . And after that I fell into a graveness, and said, 'I see three things, I see game, scorn, and earnest. I see a game in that the fiend is overcome; I see scorn in that God scorneth him, and he shall be scorned, and I see earnest in that he is overcome by the blissful Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ which was done in full earnest, and sore travail. When I said he is scorned, I meant that God scorneth him, that is to say, that He seeth him now as He shall do without end. And in this word God showed that the fiend is condemned. And this meant I when I said he shall be scorned at Doomsday generally, of all that shall be saved to whose consolation he hath great ill-will. For then he shall see that all the woe and tribulation that he hath done to them shall be turned to increase of their joy without end, and all the pain and tribulation that he would have brought them to shall endlessly go with him to hell.'

Far from being a doctrine of darkness, the mediæval faith was that his Maker had good will to man.

In the same spirit Walter Hilton the Carthusian belabours Satan with great vehemence:

When grace bringeth the fiend into the sight of the soul as a clumsy caitiff bound by the power of Jesus

> that he cannot hurt, then the soul seeing his nature and his malice turneth him upside down, and spoileth him, and rendeth him all to naught, scorneth him, and despiseth him, and setteth naught by his malice. . . . Much wonder hath the soul that the fiend hath so much malice and so little might. He can do naught without leave of Our Lord, not even enter into a swine, as the Gospel saith. The soul feareth no more the blustering of the fiend than the stirring of a mouse.

The Yorkshire hermit, Saint Richard of Hampole, says, 'He bound Satan so that he might never thereafter harm or offend the folk as before.'

This blusterer with much malice and little might is a very different being to Milton's Satan. That this was the popular mediæval way of regarding him is shown by the miracle plays in which the comic element is always supplied by the devil. In the more elaborate spectacles presented on great occasions he appeared with four tails. Hence the French proverb 'faire le diable à quatre.' The teachers and pastors of the people would have quoted doubtless, 'The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child put his hand in the cockatrice's den.' The primitive Liturgy of St Clement says that God 'has given

over to us bound the man slaying serpent, as a sparrow to children.'

The reference is to Leviathan in the xli[st] chapter of Job. So in popular legend and folklore he is outwitted constantly, contracts made with him are broken, he is again and again deceived by the simplest expedients, as substituting a lantern for the sunrise. This, if I remember rightly, occurs in the legend of the Devil's Dyke at Brighton. As a child terrified by a very different Satan, I remember the light brought to my own spirit by some story of the kind. The expedient in this case was cutting the sole out of a shoe, which the devil had to fill with silver. The shoe was never filled, and so he could never claim his part of the bargain. I remember feeling a thrill of relief at seeing that it was possible to evade and elude him after all.

These stories occur endlessly in every corner of every country in Christendom. There is an Icelandic legend which is possibly the origin of the proverb, 'the devil take the hindmost.' He had agreed to instruct seven scholars in all the mysteries of magic for no other reward than that when their seven years' apprenticeship was over,

he should have as his thrall the last to leave for the last time by the single narrow iron door. On the fatal day the last to leave literally escaped him—eluded him by slipping out of his cloak which the devil had grasped. He became a most worthy parish priest, venerated all over the island. As the iron door slammed to, it crushed his heel. The legends and ballads of the people are to the great dogmas of the faith, what the child's prattle is to the man's grave speech—the same language, the same thing.

He is constantly represented as childish, grotesque, spiteful. With his bellows he tries to put out St Genvieve's candle as she carries it alight thro' rain and wind to Church. A very well-known legend is that of St Dunstan who when attacked by him whilst busy at the forge brought the conflict to an end by seizing the Adversary with the red-hot tongs. This incident was the most popular pageant provided by the goldsmiths on Lord Mayor's Day, when the mayor happened to be elected from their company.

The triumph over the powers of evil was also represented in the ritual of the Church, notally in the Rogationtide processions. The two first days 'a dragon with a great tail

of chaff' was borne before the Cross, and the third day after the Cross 'with his tail all void' the Golden Legend says. 'By this is understood that the first day before the law, and the second under the law the devil reigned in the world, and on the third day of grace by the passion of Jesus Christ he is put out of his realm.' To Puritanism, after all that had been done, the devil was still 'the Prince of this world.' Yet of that hour that was the hour and power of darkness it was said, 'Now is the judgment of this world; now must the Prince of this world be cast out.'

The Golden Legend gives a detailed account of the Rogationtide ceremonies. Of the Cross it says that the evil spirits 'dread the staff with which they have been hurt.' A modern hymn has popularised this,

> At the Sign of triumph
> Satan's host doth flee.

The lion and the dragon are the animals typical of the devil. 'Thou shalt go upon the lion and the adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet' (Ps. xci. 13). So too in the New Testament Satan is compared to a 'roaring lion.' It

is said that the ancient idea of the animosity between the lion and the cock is the origin of the placing of the weather-cock upon the steeple. A mediæval rhythm says of the cock

In nocte dum concinat leo perturbatur,

and the idea was to terrify Satan by the sight of his enemy on the highest point of the sacred building. The dragon was the symbol of the powers of darkness everywhere. In many of the stories of Saints delivering a country side from a devouring dragon, the dragon obviously represents Paganism destroyed by the labours of the Christian apostle. Up to the French Revolution a prisoner was set free at Rouen every year on Ascension Day in commemoration of the deliverance of the people from a dragon by St Romain. In Provence St Martha bound a monster called the Tarasque with her girdle, so that the people could slay him 'with swords and glaives.' Hence the name Tarascon. In Spain a monstrous snake called La Tarasca is dragged in the Corpus Christi processions to signify Christ's Triumph over Death and Hell. By the way, the Elizabethan Injunc-

tions decreed that in the Rogationtide processions 'there should be neither George nor Margaret, but the old dragon to come on alone and show himself.'

A whole stream of traditional teaching came down from St Paul's words 'made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it,' *i.e.*, the Cross. I have before me 'A Sermon preached at Worcester on the eighteenth of April, 1686, being the Second Sunday after Easter, by the Reverend Father Henry Humbertstone, Priest of the Society of Jesus.' The subject is the Sign of the Cross. 'St Paul saith that Our Saviour Crucified did carry the Devil in triumph, and made him a spectacle to God and His Angels.

> 'Tis a remark of Origen upon this place that as Christ was crucified visibly, the Devil was crucified invisibly. Our Lord, by suffering Himself to be crucified, you know did deprive Himself of the use of His Arms for a time; so the Devil by the Cross, lost the use of his arms, that is, of his power over mankind for ever. . . . For this cause he is afraid of the Cross as a malefactor is afraid of the gallows, or as a dog is afraid of the stick with which he has been beaten. The infernal spirits saith St Anthony fear that Sign by which Our Saviour triumphed over them, and made them the scorn of heaven and earth.

So it was believed for the children of the Church, the Enemy was rendered powerless by a little holy water, or by the Name of Jesus.

No sketch of Christian tradition about the Devil, however slight, can leave out of account his character of the 'Prince of the Powers of the Air.' He was believed to have special power over the air, to be continually stirring up thunderstorms and tempests of wind and hail. Hence the ringing of the bells during thunderstorms to frighten the evil spirits away. Again we find the belief in Dante:

> Giunse quel mal voler che mal chiede
> Con l'intelletto, e mosse il fummo e il vento
> Per la virtù che la sua natura diede.'
>
> (*Purg.* v. 112.)

'Then came that evil will that ever seeks for evil, and stirred up smoke and wind by the virtue that his nature gave.' It was by the help of Satan that Simon Magus, according to the early Christian legend, floated in the air till commanded by St Peter to descend. It is significant that Leonardo da Vinci, the typical figure of the Renaissance spent many years of his life in the endeavour to invent a flying

machine. The opposition he met with from the clergy and devout people was intense. It is indeed difficult to imagine a more concrete symbol of all that is most opposed to what has been known historically as the Christian spirit than a flying machine. It must have seemed a partaking of Lucifer's daring presumption, to be speedily followed by a similar fall.

It is the old problem, the eternal debate between Christianity and paganism, humanism, science, call it what you will. It is too great a question to be more than briefly touched on here. Both are necessary, and the future may hold in store some reconciliation of the two. But one may at least point out the barrenness of scientific conquest, and the littleness of human effort apart from the hopes and vistas opened to our race by the Incarnation and the Cross. 'The brightness of that central Truth shades into gloom on all sides,' but the most grotesque and puerile of the legends of the Middle Ages, the most mythical and uncertain of the traditions of the Church at least graphically expresses the weakness and the emptiness of evil, the victory of Good, the certainty of the Divine Purpose,

and the greatness of the destiny reserved for man. Mankind is not the prey of evil powers, nor the sport of blind fate or chance, but ruled in love by an All-seeing Person, holding in His hand the crystal globe which is the mirror of the world.

JUDAS IN LEGEND AND FOLK-LORE

It it impossible for the mind to conceive words more terrible than these, 'It had been good for that man if he had not been born.' For long ages the words, as they fell upon men's ears, seem to have called forth a sense of fierce exultation. The mystic hatred of the Betrayer was in proportion to the adoring love of the Betrayed. One should not, perhaps, too hastily assume that the dying out of this feeling is pure gain. In the case of the great mass of the people, it is probably due, not to any growth of imaginative human sympathy, but to loss of interest in the great Drama itself.

Over the wild mediæval stories of the childhood of Judas we will not linger. The real popular indignation against him begins

with the murmuring at the waste of the precious ointment. This murmur is the first moment of a Drama which moves through the scenes of the Supper, the Kiss, the Remorse, and the Hanging. The Golden Legend says: 'Then it happed that he was angry and sorry for the ointment that Mary Magdalene poured on the feet and head of our Lord Jesus Christ, and said that it was worth three hundred pence, and so much he had lost, and therefore sold he Jesus Christ for thirty pieces of that money, of which every penny was worth tenpence, and so he received three hundred pence. Or after that, some say, he ought to have of all the gifts given to Jesus Christ the tenth penny, and so he recovered thirty pieces of that he sold Him.' Legend has invested these thirty pieces with a long mysterious history. They were made of the precious metal brought by Adam out of Paradise, and were coined by Ninus, King of Assyria. Abraham carried them into the land of Canaan, and with them Joseph was bought by the Ishmaelites. They were in the treasures of Pharaoh, of Solomon, of Nebuchadnezzar. The Magi offered them to the Holy Child. At last, by command

of Jesus himself, they were given to the temple at Jerusalem, whence they were paid by the chief priests to Judas, and afterwards to the soldiers who watched the tomb.

The scene of the Supper has stamped itself upon men's minds as few others in all history have done, and has evoked a whole world of wonderment and fancy. It is unnecessary to mention the superstition about the number thirteen. 'He sat down with the twelve,' Judas sat on the right hand of Our Lord, between St John and St Peter. One thinks of the last days of those three comrades—of the hideous death of Judas, of the world-making martyrdom of St Peter, of the figure described by the great Russian seer, the old St John, all white, a keeper of bees, smelling of wax and honey. In Leonardo's picture the hand of Judas is upon the salt-cellar, which he upsets as he says, 'Lord, is it I?' This little detail, carried all over Europe as the Faith spread, may have given rise to the superstition expressed in the proverb, 'He who spills salt, spills sorrow.' The idea that the ill effects may be warded off by throwing the spilt salt over the left shoulder is, no doubt, explained by the old belief that the

Good Angel is stationed on the right side of every man, the Demon on the left.

The Kiss of Judas is the climax of the story. To the natural feeling of hatred for the treacherous slayer, 'the smiler with the knife behind his cloak,' was added in the Middle Ages the mystic horror of the Betrayer of his God. Judas is 'the traitor' *par excellence*. Dante calls treachery 'the lance with which Judas jousted.' All such proverbs as 'langue de miel, cœur de fiel,' have in them a backward glance at Judas. The 'Judas kiss' was proverbial everywhere. Shakespeare is full of references to it. He makes Richard II say:—

> Did they not sometimes cry All hail! to me
> As Judas did to Christ? But He, in twelve, found faith
> In all save one; I in twelve thousand none.—(Act IV.)

Again he makes the detested Richard Crookback enact the very part of Judas himself adding in an aside:—

> So Judas kissed his Master,
> And cried All hail! when as he meant All harm!—
> (III. *Henry VI*, v. 7.)

Legend is pitiless in dealing with his Remorse and Death. A palsied death-struck terror fell on Judas 'when he saw

that He was condemned.' An old French charm for a burn was :—

> Feu, feu, perds ta chaleur,
> Comme Judas sa couleur,
> Quand il trahit le Sauveur.

Of his suicide it was said that he was not allowed 'to die on the earth, because all earthly creatures ought to hate him, but in the air where devils and evil spirits are, because he had deserved to be in their company.' The 'Prince of the Powers of the Air' claimed him in his own domain, as he did afterwards Simon Magus. The prefiguring traitor Absalom had also died hanging from a tree. The tree of Judas is said to have grown over a hollow ravine, down which 'he fell headlong, and burst asunder, and his bowels gushed out.' The traditional belief is that it was an elder. This again is found in Shakespeare, whose plays are a perfect mine of the folk-lore of the Middle Ages. 'Judas was hanged on an elder,' says someone in *Love's Labours Lost* (Act v. 4). So in *Piers Plowman* we read :—

> Judas, he japed with Jewen silver,
> And sithen on an elder hanged himselve.

I was once told by a poor man in a country village, 'I've often sat cold rather than burn elder.' It makes a weird picture to imagine an old crone in a remote hamlet, say, in the Sussex downs, muttering evil spells by the flickering flames of this unholy wood.

The traditional red hair of Judas was, curiously enough, also ascribed to Cain. In the *Merry Wives of Windsor* Simple says of Master Slender that 'he had but a little wee face, with a little yellow beard, a Cain-coloured beard' (Act I. 4). In Shakespeare's time all these traditional details were doubtless known to the mass of people through the Mystery-plays. A mediæval Latin Proverb says, 'vix reperitur homo rufus sine proditione.' In many countries the Jews were compelled by law to dress in yellow. There was a curious folk tale that Judas Iscariot was turned into a squirrel, which in parts of England gave rise to the custom of hunting the little russet creature on Good Friday.

The like vindictive scenes are still enacted all over Christendom in the last days of Holy Week. In springtime in Provence, when the beans are in flower, and the orchards are rosy and white with the blossom

of almond and cherry, children, shrill and merry as crickets, laugh and shout at the game of 'hammering Judas.' Spanish sailors hang him each Good Friday from the yard-arm of their ships. In old England he was carried round in scarecrow effigy all through Lent, and burned on Good Friday. This figure was called a 'Jack-a-lent.' Strange as it seems, this vengeance-taking formed part of the Easter joy. The Paschal Candle itself was called the 'Judas,' because the wax effigy of Judas was hung from it. There is no mercy shown him anywhere, except in the Celtic legend of St Brendan, and even here, in the original story, it is strangely tempered with justice.

It was over and over again forbidden by the Church that a child should be baptised by the name of Jude. To this day the name probably does not exist outside Mr Hardy's novel. With regard to great sinners in general, and Judas in particular, the feeling was, 'I will not make mention of their names within my lips,' 'Let his name be clean put out.'

The briefest sketch of the lore of Judas must include some mention of Psalm cix., the terrific Psalm of cursing known as the

'Judas Psalm.' The traditional interpretation is fixed by the words of St Peter in the Pentecostal sermon, 'For it is written in the Book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and no man dwell therein, and his bishopric let another take' (Acts ii. 20). In this sense it has been commented upon in the minutest detail, verse by verse. In Germany it was known as the 'todt-beten,' and was used as a kind of 'black Paternoster,' efficacious in causing the death of an enemy. The Jews had used it in this way before the Christians. It was their custom to put mustard and water into a new vessel, to say this Psalm over it three days in succession, and then to pour it out before the door of the enemy they wished to destroy. But all the stored-up vengeance of the awful words, as of black masses of cloud, heavy with hail and quick with lightning, breaks in a storm of cursing upon the head of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, who also betrayed Him.

SPIDERS IN LEGEND AND FOLK-LORE

THE spider in English, as in all Teutonic tongues, is literally 'the spinner.' In the Greek myth, Arachne was a mortal maiden who competed with Minerva in weaving a web embroidered with the story of the loves of Jove, and who was changed by the angry goddess into an insect for daring to measure her skill against hers. This story is recalled by the names of the spider in the Romance languages — *araignèe*, *araña*, and the rest. This identification of the spider with the art and mystery of spinning perhaps goes far to account for the popular sympathy she has everywhere evoked. She has been looked upon as a living type of perseverance and industry. The distaff is one of the permanent human possessions—it is the symbol of our

first mother. In common speech the female line is 'the distaff side.' It was Adam's office to dig and Eve's to spin :—

When Adam delved and Eve span,

was a proverb in Old England. The very definition of the 'virtuous woman,' whose 'price is above rubies' is, 'She seeketh wool and flax and worketh willingly with her hands . . . she layeth her hands to spindle, and her hands hold the distaff . . . she is not afraid of the snow for her household, for her household is clothed in scarlet . . . she maketh herself coverings of tapestry . . . she maketh fine linen and selleth it . . . she looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.' Our forefathers must have seen many of the characteristics of this spinning provident matron in the spider.

In all ages the spiders have been looked upon as the friends and allies of man. They are credited with the qualities not only of wisdom and forethought, but also of helpfulness and friendship to man, and of gratitude for kindness received from him. Popular sympathy is always on their side as against their victims, the foolish flies, for whom in

general nothing but contempt is expressed. The shrewd and canny popular mind appreciates the spiders' keen eye for the main chance, and admires the success with which their unremitting toil is crowned. Knowing by bitter experience the necessity of food and the ceaseless effort required to obtain it, the people have little sentiment to waste over the fate of the fly. The resource and determination and persistence of the spider has called forth nothing but admiration, since in his house of gold and ivory four thousand years ago the great king watched her tireless weaving with friendly and wondering gaze, and described her as one of the four things which are 'little on the earth, and yet are exceeding wise.' The spiders' companions in wisdom are the conies, the ants, and the locusts. It is indeed a kind of animal canonisation to have been described as 'exceeding wise' by the wise king who knew the language of birds and beasts and the ways of all living things, and his pronouncement has doubtless been a great fountain of the popular respect felt for them.

The Rabbis say that David in his youth asked why God had created three things —madmen, spiders, and flies. One must

suppose that the Psalmist had never been persecuted on silent August days by the intolerable drone of bluebottles, or tried in vain to beat off the black swarm in close, narrow country lanes, or he would never have asked the 'why?' of spiders. The Curé d'Ars is said to have resolved never to drive away a fly—a mortification surely unique in all the annals of asceticism. David however was told that in days to come he would prove in his own person the utility of all three. Accordingly he was himself driven to feign madness when he 'scrambled on the gate and let the spittle run down to his beard' in Gath before Achish. Once more, when 'he remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph and Saul sought him every day,' the spiders came and spun their webs over the mouth of the cave in which he was hidden, so that the soldiers seeking him thought no one could be there. In Psalm lvii, made by David 'when he fled from Saul in the cave,' we read, 'I will call upon God most High; upon God who performeth all things for me. He shall send from heaven and save me from the reproof of him that would swallow me up.' In this case, according to the story, the deliverer sent from heaven was not an

angel but a spider. This same good office the kindly spider has in all ages performed for hunted and persecuted men. One need hardly say that it is told of the Christ-Child that when King Herod was seeking Him the spiders came and spun their webs over the Manger, so that he was hidden by them as David was in the cave.

The legend of St Felix is a good example of these spider stories. 'As he preached on a time,' the Golden Legend says, 'the persecutors sought him and he hid him in the clefts of a broken wall, and incontinent by the will of God, came spincops and made their work and nets before him that they might not find him.' A cobweb, by the way, is literally a spincop's web, a spider's web. On his escape Felix said :—

> Presente Christo, aranea fit murus,
> Absente Christo, murus fit aranea :

which we may English thus :—

The spider's web with Thee, O Christ, is a wall great and fair,
The wall becomes a cobweb, Christ, if Thou art not there.

Stories on the theme of the weak things of the world confounding the strong never fail

to appeal to the popular sentiment. This Felix was a schoolmaster and seems to have wielded the rod with the assiduity of a Busby or a Keate. The story of his martyrdom (for the spiders did not save him in the last resort) is most curious and shows a touch of humour in his pagan persecutors—a preference for 'something humourous and lingering' after the manner of the *Mikado*. 'They delivered him over to the scholars whom he had taught and learned,' and these innocents, it seems, pricked him to death with their 'pointelles' or 'griffes.' These were the slate pencils of those days, the sharp-pointed instruments used for writing on tablets of wax. 'Yet Holy Church holdeth him for no martyr, but a confessor,' the Golden Legend naïvely adds. One cannot help feeling that after all there was a touch of poetic justice in his end.

Forethought and gratitude are the two great qualities of the wire spider's mind which 'looks before and after.' There is an Eastern story of a man who in the whole course of his life had done not one single good deed, and who accordingly was condemned to the nethermost hell. Then a spider remembered that he had once helped

her, and let down her web to him by the aid of which he climbed up out of the bottomless abyss.

Enough has been said to show how it is that the spider is looked upon with kindness and even regarded as a bringer of good luck. In spite of the example of Miss Muffett ladies are not generally frightened of spiders, as they are of bats or even mice. True, the French proverb says :—

Araignée de matin,
Chagrin.

but it immediately adds :—

Araignée de soir,
Espoir.

In no possible circumstances is a bat, for instance, regarded as the harbinger of hope. The universal feeling about the spider as a friendly little creature with whom it is right and wise to be on good terms is well expressed in the English folk-rhyme :—

Let the spider run alive,
You will always live and thrive.

BIRDS IN CHRISTIAN LEGEND AND SYMBOL

R. S. HAWKER, the Vicar of Morwenstow, invented the saying 'ubi aves, ibi angeli,' which as his manner was, he attributed to St Basil. The phrase well expresses the idea of the sacredness of birds, which seems to have been a part of all religions. In Greek temples two thousand years ago the birds were sacred guests, as they are in Mohammedan mosques and Hindoo shrines to-day. So too among the Jews, since David's swallow found her a nest where she might lay her young within the hallowed ground. Shakespeare speaks, by the way, of the 'temple-haunting martlet.'

By the Christians of the early and

Middle Ages this feeling was fully shared. The folk-lore of Christian lands is full of the birds. To the man of mediæval England, the waggoner who brought Dick Whittington to London, the wooden-legged soldier home from the wars in France, because of the meanings and associations which he saw everywhere the world was more pleasant and more alive. Our forefathers had not our modern privileges, our cheap press, our tinned food; they believed in miracles and knew little about machinery, but they were able to find joy in the red of a robin's breast, to see in it a sacred meaning and to weave lovely fancies round it. What would that little patch of crimson feathers suggest to a Board School child in one of our large towns to-day? It is a curious fact, showing how they lived with nature in a way which we have ceased to do, that in Old England the birds had each their Christian name. Some of these have survived as Jack Daw, Tom Tit, Robin Redbreast and Jenny Wren. In Plantagenet and Tudor England the sparrow was Philip Sparrow. So in French the kingfisher is Martin Pêiheur.

Many folk rhymes express the sacred-

ness of familiar birds. In Sussex they say

> The martins and the swallows
> Are God Almighty's scholars,
> The robins and the wrens
> Are God Almighty's friends.

Another rhyme runs

> The robin and the wren
> Are God Almighty's cock and hen.

The same thing is found in Scotland:

> The laverock and the lintie
> The robin and the wren,
> If you harry their nests
> You'll ne'er thrive again.

This coupling together of the robin and the wren as the special friends of God may perhaps be connected with the legend that a wren was in the stable at Bethlehem at the time of the Saviour's birth, and again that as he hung on Calvary a robin endeavoured to staunch with her breast the flow of Blood from His Side; so that the robin and the wren were with Him at the beginning and the close of His earthly life. In parts of Wales they call the robin the 'breast-burned bird.' There is a compassionate Celtic legend that his breast was

scorched as he approached too near the flame carrying to the souls in torment drops of dew in his tiny bill.

The sacred mythology of the Nativity and the Passion sprang up everywhere among the people, before the myth-making faculty had disappeared, and when their minds constantly dwelt upon the Faith in a spirit, not of controversy, but of devotion. It seems too that there was in the Christianity of the earlier ages, something which we may perhaps call a Pantheist element, which has since disappeared. It was always of course in abeyance, but one finds it again and again, as in St Francis, and more especially in Celtic versions of the faith. St Patrick, for instance, in the hymn known as his 'Breastplate,' after the usual professions of faith in 'the strong name of the Trinity,' the Death on the Cross, and the rest, 'binds to himself' the living forces of nature with all their saving and healing powers. To the mediæval myth-makers the world was not a dead machine, but a living and growing thing.

Amid the changes of the sixteenth century the faculty seems to have been lost. The violet of a legend never bloomed amid the

arid wastes of Puritan controversy. The sacred lore of birds and flowers can only blossom in an atmosphere of spiritual leisure and content. What would John Bunyan, for instance, have made of the legend of the Crossbill? It might have appealed to his imagination for a moment, but he would sternly have put it away as a piece of Popish folly, which in no way helped to answer the agonised question which every man had to wrestle with in the solitude of his own soul. The name 'Crossbill' tells its own tale. The bird twisted its beak in striving to draw out the nail which transfixed the Saviour's Hand. The stork again is an altogether lovable and sacred bird. In Sweden they say that on the first Good Friday it circled round and round the Cross, endeavouring to encourage the Sufferer by its cries. A like loving office is ascribed in Spain to the swallows:

> For swallows on Mount Calvary,
> Plucked tenderly away
> From the brow of Christ two thousand thorns,
> Such gracious birds are they.

So the swallows carry with them the blessing of God, and it is a happy house, beneath whose eaves they build.

The swallow indeed is the most purely delightful of all winged things. The swift is known as the 'hadji,' the pilgrim, in Eastern lands, and has the pilgrim's claim on the hospitality and kindness of all the faithful. The swallows bring with them the very spirit of adventure and romance, the charm of distance, the appeal of the unknown, or the nostalgia of the known and loved. To the good knight in prison in heathen lands they must have brought the landscape that he longed for, the white Picardy road with its windmills and Calvaries, amid open rolling country, running between hedgeless fields of flax, and beans, and beetroot. To us, amid homely scenes they bring the East, and all their lands of travel. They have seen the Lombard belfries. They come, the pilgrim swallows, from far off shores, they have seen new mountains and new seas. I remember seeing at Siena, a fresco of the Annunciation in which a swallow has alighted in the cottage of the Virgin. Here it is a type of the Divine Promise of the Incarnation, travelling down through the long ages.

I do not know that many sacred associations have gathered round the sparrow, the companion bird of David's text, though in

French he is called the 'moineau,' the 'little monk,' because of his brown coat. But he appears more than once in the Psalms, and the old commentators did not fail to find in him a holy meaning. 'Ave, Passer salutaris' one old hymn says.

The wren is usually looked upon with a tender regard. There is a Scotch saying,

> Malisons, malisons, mair than ten
> That harry the Lady of Heaven's hen.

Nevertheless there exists in some places a cruel custom called 'hunting the wren.' The verse repeated on these occasions runs,

> The wren, the wren, the king of all birds
> St Stephen's Day was caught in the furse.

The tradition by the way of how the wren became the 'king of all birds,' though not specifically Christian, is a good example of the myth-making faculty which so lovingly wove its fancies round the Christian faith. It is preserved in the names given to the wren in almost every European language. He is *βασιλίσκος* in Greek, regulus, rex avium, in Latin. He is 'rè di siepe,' 'king of the hedge' in Italian, 'reyzuelo,' the 'little king'

in Spanish, 'roilelet,' 'roi des oiseaux' in French. In German again he is 'Zaunkönig,' the 'hedge king.' The story is that the birds having agreed that the bird who could fly highest should be elected king, the wren hid himself in the eagle's feathers. The eagle, having outdistanced even the lark, and ceasing to soar, the wren flew out and flew above him, and flying higher than all was declared king.

The eagle however has not been altogether dislodged from his proud position. He is often spoken of as 'the king of birds.' Mediæval writers delight in all sorts of wild and wonderful tales about his renewing his youth by gazing at the sun, and plunging into a clear stream, and allegorise at length on the Waters of Baptism, and the True Sun, Jesus Christ. The Evangelistic Symbols of the man, the lion, the ox, and the eagle are almost as old as the Gospels themselves. The eagle is the symbol of St John, the Evangelist of In Principio, 'che sovra gli altri com' aquila vola,' as Dante says, 'who like an eagle soars above the rest,' and gazes on the Sun of the Divinity.

The fantastic natural history of the early and Middle Ages, the wonderful tales brought

back from the East by crusaders, and pilgrims and travellers like Friar Odoric or Sir John Mandeville, strongly coloured Christian allegory and symbolism. Chief among the types of the Redeemer is the Pelican feeding its young with blood from its own breast. The following verse is a specimen of mediæval devotion:

> The pelican his blood did bleed
> Therewith his nestlings for to feed;
> This betokeneth on the Rood
> How our Lord fed us with his blood,
> When he ransomed us out of hell
> In joy and bliss with Him to dwell,
> And be our Father and our food,
> And we His children meek and good.

This idea has passed into the Offices of the Church.

> Pie Pelicane, Jesu Domine,
> Munda me immundum Tuo Sanguine,

says the hymn. 'Fountain of goodness' is the colourless rendering in modern books. Sometimes the Pelican is represented over the Head of the Saviour, perched on the summit of the Cross.

The fabulous bird the Phœnix has been

a Christian symbol from the Catacombs onward. The Rabbis explained its immortality by saying that all the other birds ate together with Eve of the forbidden fruit except the Phœnix who therefore remained immortal. In the Middle Ages this deathless bird was believed to inhabit the sacred garden of the Earthly Paradise together with other living things, birds and animals of rare and surpassing beauty. The name 'bird of paradise' tells its own story. Another symbol of the Resurrection was the peacock, with its glorious tail outspread. Probably, however, the reference was to the supposed incorruptibility of its flesh, in the wild natural history of ancient times. The peacock in general has a bad name. It is the creature typical of the deadly sin of pride, having for its six companions, the goat, the pig, the toad, the snake, the leopard, and the tortoise. Its vanity has become proverbial, as in our 'proud as a peacock,' and words like the Italian 'pavoneggiarsi.'

There are some birds which are popularly disliked, others are disliked but yet admitted to have some good points, and treated with a certain respect. Prominent among the first is the owl. An old English carol,

celebrating the praises of the holly, so loved of our forefathers, thus taunts the ivy,

> Holly hath birdis, a full fair flock,
> The nightingale, the popinjay, the gentle laverock,
> Good ivy, what birdis hast thou?
> None but the owlet that crieth 'How! How!'

Yet a kindly Spanish legend asserts that the owl was once the sweetest of singers, but that being present when Our Lord expired, from that moment he has shunned the daylight, and uttered only a harsh monotonous cry. In Andalusia they say he repeats the word 'Cruz, Cruz.'

The raven is looked upon with divided feelings. He is the 'bird of evil omen' par excellence. 'Corvo di mal augurio' is indeed the Italian equivalent of the phrase. According to the Fathers he is the emblem of procrastination with his cry of 'cras, cras,' 'to-morrow, to-morrow.' His not having returned to the Ark has always been remembered against him. Yet he too is a pious bird. One of our earliest lessons was the story of the ravens bringing food to Elijah. The Golden Legend tells us of a raven which guarded the dead body of St Vincent thrown into the field to be devoured

by beasts, 'which drove away all other birds and fowls bigger than he was, and chased away also a wolf with his bill and beak.' It is said by the way three times in Scripture that God 'feedeth the ravens,' in Job, in the Psalms, and by Our Lord in St Luke, and twice that they 'call upon Him.'

The raven too played his part in the Christmas mystery. It was said that at the hour of the Great Birth, the cock crowed, 'Christus Natus est,' the raven croaked, 'Quando?' the rook cawed 'hac nocte,' the ox mo'od 'Ubi?' the sheep bleated 'Bethlehem,' and the ass brayed 'Eamus.' This is found as early as the fourth century. There is a fresco of it at Linchmere in Sussex.

The tradition of the cock crowing on Christmas night is recorded by Shakespeare,

> Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
> Whereon Our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
> The bird of dawning singeth all night long.

It was surely a devout and happy thought to see in the cheery cock-crow an annunciation of the Good News. There is a Russian proverb quoted by Tolstoï in 'Resurrection' that 'The cock crows early on all joyful

nights.' I have myself again and again, year after year, heard it at midnight upon Christmas Eve. Our forefathers heard it no doubt on their way to the Midnight Mass. A mediæval rhythm says about the cock

> Quasi rex in capite, gallus coronatur,
> In pede calcaribus, ut miles armatur.

'The cock wears a crown on his head like a king; his feet are armed with spurs as a soldier.' The Italian word for 'cocks-comb' is 'regalia.' Tho' often regarded an an emblem of pride and boastfulness, his association with the story of St Peter gave him something of a sacred character. He was looked upon as the admonisher of Christian souls, and placed upon the steeple as a continual reminder to the faithful to watch and pray. He is an especial type of the priest. But above all, a world of cheerful association hangs round him as the harbinger of day. He is the bird of day as the owl is the bird of night. The Jewish morning prayer begins, Blessed be God who hath given power to the cock to distinguish light from darkness.' Prudentius, the fourth century hymn writer, calls him, 'ales diei nuntius,' 'the winged

herald of the day.' The second of the three Christmas Masses, called in France the 'Messe de l'Aurore,' is in Spain the 'Misa del Gallo,' the 'Mass of the Cock.' Of the sacred associations of the hen I need hardly speak. 'He shall defend thee under his wings, and thou shalt be safe under his feathers' (Ps. xci. 4) and 'how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings' (St Matt. xxiii. 37.)

With a mention of the most sacred bird of all I will bring these notes to a close. To Christian souls the Dove is among birds what the Lamb is among beasts. The Dove returning to the ark at evening with the olive leaf, the Dove of the Psalms that 'is covered with silver wings and her feathers with gold,' the Dove that flies away and is at rest, who gets her away afar off and remains in the wilderness, making haste to escape because of the stormy wind and tempest, has given us some of the most beautiful passages of the Old Testament, and in the New we have that more sacred Dove of the Annunciation and the Baptism under whose Image Christian children think of the Spirit of God.

THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION IN SHAKESPEARE

THERE was in the Middle Ages a vast popular culture, which was still alive in Shakespeare's time. The references to the events and personages of sacred history and mythology with which his plays are filled were at once intelligible to the whole audience This culture was religious in origin. There was an accepted version of the history and meaning of the world, from the Creation to Doomsday, familiar to everybody, and this vast framework was filled in the popular mind with action and life. In our own time the mental world of the great mass is quite blank and unpeopled. I saw the other day on a cottage wall, a framed sampler depicting David in royal robes with crown and harp. By way of saying something, I asked the good woman who it

represented, and received the listless reply. 'I couldn't tell you, I'm sure.' Nobody in the Middle Ages or in Elizabethan England would have had a moment's hesitation over a picture of King David. All the kings and prophets of the Tree of Jesse, 'the nine sibyls of old Rome,' 'the Nine Worthies,' 'the Seven Champions of Christendom,' were familiar to the people, if not in their habits as they lived, yet in the conventional presentment of them at once recognised by all. Everybody knew that the palmer bedizened with scallop shells, carrying an immense gourd and staff was St James the Great. Everybody knew that the knight on horseback, brandishing a lance and trampling a dragon was St George. These representations were everywhere.

> St George that swinged the dragon, and e'er since
> Sits upon horseback at our hostess' door.

says the Bastard in *King John* (Act. xi. 1). Shakespeare's own mind had thus from his earliest days been filled with a whole world of imagery—'Pharaoh's soldiers, and god Bel's priests in the old church window, and the shaven Hercules in the moth-eaten tapestry.'

The miracle plays were undoubtedly the great means by which this traditional culture was diffused among the people. What a whole world of enchantment and wonder rises before one on reading the very names of these plays—*the Falling of Lucifer, the Creation of the World, Noah's Ship, the Three Kings of Cologne, the Harrowing of Hell, the Coronation of our Lady, Doomsday!* Shakespeare was the heir of all this wonderful lore of the Middle Ages. The plays were passing away in his time, but they died hard, and the whole atmosphere in which he lived was saturated with their influence. He must have often seen them as a boy. One likes to think of the shining morning face of little Willie Shakespeare among the crowd when the pageant was set up in Stratford street, and the shows of Heaven and Hell, 'the Making of all the World,' Paradise, Bethlehem, Calvary, were played. No detail would be missed by the boy's keen eyes, no word lost by his sharp ears.

The great themes of the wonder of the Middle Ages were the Creation and the Redemption and the final Doom of the World. These were the subjects of the plays. This wonder Shakespeare seems to

have felt in the very marrow of his bones. It is the very word which he uses when he speaks of 'such wonder as we feel' at hearing of 'a world ransomed or destroyed.' Perhaps the passage

> Like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself;
> Yea, all which it inherit shall dissolve,
> And like this unsubstantial pageant faded
> Leave not a wrack behind, (*Tempest*, iv. 1)

may record the impression left on the boy's mind by the spectacle of *Doomsday*.

Much has been written on the question of the religion of Shakespeare. For my own part, (though at times he certainly doubted the existence of another life), I believe that he held the Apostles' Creed. This covers the ground of the whole cycle of the miracle plays from the Creation to the Doom. His knowledge of the Christian doctrine was probably derived rather from these plays than from the catechisms of bare-footed friars or the sermons of Puritan divines. The religion which the Shakesperean drama reflects is the popular mediæval Christianity. This, like the Puritanism which succeeded it revolves round the ideas of the Fall and

the Redemption. The difference was that Puritanism intensified the first and limited the second. That 'all the souls that were were forfeit once, and He that might the vantage best have took, found out the Remedy,' (*Measure for Measure*, xi. 2) was the very foundation of miracle-play theology.

The view so attractively put forward in our own time, in which the Incarnation rather than the Redemption is made the centre of the Christian system, has never I think been popularly held. The miracle plays give it little support. The devotion to Jesus Christ, which both before and after the Reformation, has perhaps characterised English religion in a peculiar degree, is as we find it in Shakespeare a devotion to a Redeemer. We hear again and again of

> The precious image of our dear Redeemer,
> (*Rich. III*, ii. 1)

of

> The sepulchre in stubborn Jewry
> Of the world's Ransom, blessed Mary's Son,
> (*Rich. II*, ii. 1)

of

> The blessed feet
> That fourteen hundred years ago were nailed
> For our advantage to the bitter Cross.
> (1 *Henry IV*, i. 1)

It was above all the Passion, the Ecce Homo, the Way of the Cross, Calvary, which was always before the eyes of the people of mediæval England, and therefore ever in their minds.

Such a speech as Portia's,

> Tho' justice be thy plea, consider this,
> That in the course of justice none of us
> Should see salvation,
>
> (*Merchant of Venice*, iv. i)

would suggest no vague confidence in the Divine goodness, but a very definite picture indeed to an Elizabethan audience. The 'Reconciliation of the Virtues' was a theme often treated of in the miracle plays. The reader may remember that Longfellow begins his *Nativity Play* after the mediæval models with the pleading of Justice and Mercy for and against the Culprit Man before the Throne of God. The idea is worked out in a great sermon of St Bernard on the text 'Mercy and Truth are met together; Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other' (Psalm lxxxv. 10). The four Virtues are Justice, Truth, Mercy and Peace, with which Man was endowed at the first, but which he lost at the fall. These four sacred

sisters, before at peace together, are henceforth at discord among themselves. Justice and Truth accuse man before his Maker, Mercy and Peace plead for him. In the fulness of time they meet together in the Person of the Saviour, and embrace on Mount Calvary. This is the subject of one of the tapestries in Hampton Court Palace. The three Persons of the Trinity are seen as three crowned and sceptred Figures before whom the four Virtues are contending. On the one hand stands Justice with the drawn sword, and Truth with the book exactly worded, on the other Peace with the olive branch, and Mercy with the lily of the far-off Annunciation. I remember a March morning on which I had the great palace absolutely to myself, and amid all the beautiful things in that delightful place, the pictures and tapestries, the heads of the Roman Cæsars, the rooks wheeling about on the dark sky, the many coloured crocuses in the grass, the great clumps of mistletoe high up in the bare lime trees, this particular tapestry was the thing that impressed me most. A very pompous and ignorant attendant, by the way, volunteered the information

that it was the story of 'some young prince who'd got into trouble.' After all the Christian doctrine could not have been more concisely put. There is a celebrated passage of Dr Newman's to the same effect.

The cycle of the miracle plays begins with the *Fall of Lucifer*. The very A B C of the mediæval lore was that before the Creation of Man the devil fell irrecoverably, and that the cause of this fall was Pride. Shakespeare follows this teaching to the very letter when he makes Wolsey say of 'the poor man that hangs on prince's favours' that

> When he falls, he falls like Lucifer,
> Never to rise again,

and

> Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition,
> By that sin fell the angels, how shall man then
> The Image of his Maker hope to win by 't?
> (*Henry VIII*, iii. 2).

I think the growing influence of Puritanism may be traced in the references to the devil in Shakespeare. He is no longer given over bound for the sport and laughter of the children of the Church, but is becoming the mighty potentate of Milton. But the poet knew the devil of the miracle plays well.

When he makes the boy call Bardolph 'this roaring devil in the old play that every one may pare his nails with a wooden dagger' (*Henry V*, iv. 4) he is no doubt describing what he had often seen. The difference in the two conceptions explains I think why it was that the world of the Canterbury Pilgrims was so much more gay and blithe than the world of the Elizabethans. Puritanism and the Pagan Renaissance between them destroyed the old simple-hearted merriment of those who believed that mankind was essentially and fundamentally rescued from the grip of evil powers. The Elizabethan drama is full of darkness and horror, and, although the Creed is still held, leaves the impression that the world is an unsolved and insoluble riddle.

But in that drama the old traditions are still very much alive. Two very frequent characters in the mysteries and moralities were 'Bonus Angelus,' and 'Malus Angelus,' the good and the bad spirits, which, according to a belief older than Christianity, contend for the soul of every man. These are often referred to in Shakespeare. 'You follow the young prince up and down like his ill angel,' says the Chief Justice to Falstaff

(II *Henry IV*, i. 2). The fat knight himself says, 'There's a good angel about him, but the devil outbids him too,' (Act ii. 4). We often find touches showing the poet's familiarity with the representations of the angels in plays and pageants. When Lorenzo speaks of 'the young-eyed cherubim' (*Merchant of Venice* v. 1), he no doubt has in mind the cherubim as they were represented 'full of eyes,' according to the descriptions in Isaiah and St John. The ancient Liturgies always speak of the 'many eyed cherubim.' Possibly there should be no hyphen in 'young-eyed'—two adjectives may be intended instead of one. Norfolk, in describing the 'field of the Cloth of Gold,' says

> Their dwarfish pages were
> As cherubims all gilt.
>
> (*Henry VIII*, i. 1)

The wings of the cherubim were no doubt gilded to represent their flaming colour. Falstaff speaks of a flea as 'a black soul.' This was the technical name for a lost soul, the saved were 'white souls.' Not only Heaven and Hell, but the Limbus of the Fathers was frequently represented. 'I have some of them in Limbo Patrum,' says the

Porter, speaking of a mob in the last act of *Henry VIII.* He had no doubt often seen the place with the name above it in large letters in the play of the *Harrowing of Hell.* I myself remember when 'limbo' was popular English. Talking of English, there is a phrase which occurs frequently in the historical plays, which shows the true meaning of our phrase 'to pay the debt of Nature.' I suppose this is understood by most people as 'to pay the debt we owe to Nature.' But the mediæval form of the phrase was evidently 'we owe a debt to God.' Shakespeare's ruffians and profligates indeed are still able to speak of God very simply and naturally.

When we come to the Old Testament stories we find the poet referring to them constantly in the form in which they were familiar to his contemporaries. He alludes, for instance, to the story of Cain and Abel again and again. Abel the first Martyr, who is three times called 'Righteous' in the New Testament, by Our Lord Himself, by St Paul, and by St John (St Matt. xxiii. 35; Heb. xi. 4; I St John iii. 12), and who is spoken of as 'Thy Righteous Servant, Abel' in the Canon of the Mass, has always been

one of the great figures of the Divine Drama, and Cain one of the chief objects of Christian abhorrence. The tradition was that it was in a field at Damascus where the murder took place. Adam and Eve had been placed at Damascus when they were expelled from Paradise. According to the Septuagint Cain said to his brother 'Let us go into the field,' and there murdered him. In the first part of *Henry VI* Shakespeare makes Winchester say

> Nay, stand thee back, I will not budge a foot,
> Be this Damascus, be thou cursèd Cain,
> To slay thy brother Abel, if thou wilt.
>
> (Act i. 3)

The crying of Abel's blood for vengeance would doubtless be made much of in the mystery plays. We find this in *Richard II*,

> Which blood like sacrificing Abel's cries
> Even from the tongueless caverns of the earth.
>
> (Act i. 1)

We gather from Shakespeare many details of the traditional representation of the tragedy. A jawbone was always used for the committing of the murder. Hamlet speaks in the grave-digging scene of 'Cain's jawbone which did the first murder.' It

seems that Cain, like Judas, was represented as a red-haired man. In the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Simple says of Master Slender that 'he hath but a little wee face, with a little yellow beard, a Cain-coloured beard.' (Act i. 4). Red is 'the dissembling colour,' and Cain not only murdered his brother, but 'wrought guilefully' in enticing him into the field with that intention.

The constant proverbial references, to Noah, to Job, to his wife, to Sampson, to Goliath, are evidently such as were in common use in Shakespeare's time, and are such as could only be employed by people who had not only heard or read of these characters, but had seen them, and had their living images in their minds. Such proverbs as 'poor as Job' were no doubt coined by the spectators of the miracle plays. They had seen him with their own eyes setting on his dunghill. The people of our own day might no doubt speak proverbially of the strength of Sampson, or the size of Goliath—as a matter of fact they seldom do—but they would never speak like Moth, of Sampson 'carrying the towns-gates on his back,' or like Falstaff of 'Goliath with the weaver's beam.' We read again

and again of being as 'slanderous as Satan,' 'as poor as Job,' 'as wicked as his wife.' These things had become part of the people's minds. Shakespeare is full of jests about 'Noah before he was a sailor,' and the like. They call up the vivid, sometimes farcical scenes in which the audience so much delighted,—the well-known characters, Job's wife cursing and railing, Noah's wife refusing to go on board the Ark. The spectacle of Dives and Lazarus seems to have had a special attraction for Sir John Falstaff. He talks of 'Dives in his purple,' of being 'damned with the glutton'; he calls his Coventry soldiers 'slaves as ragged as Lazarus in the painted cloth when the dogs licked his sores.' There is always the vividness of the description of an eye witness.

We see in Shakespeare the profound popular impression produced by the two Passion scenes of Pilate washing his hands and Judas kissing his Master. One of the murderers of Clarence says,

> How fain would I like Pilate wash my hands
> Of this most grievous guilty murder done.
>
> (*Rich. III.* i. 4)

Again *Richard II* says

> Tho' some of you with Pilate wash your hands
> Showing an outward pity ; yet you Pilates
> Have here delivered me to my sore Cross
> And water cannot wash away your sin.
>
> (Act. iv. 1)

And yet again of Judas,

> Did they not sometimes cry All hail to me
> As Judas did to Christ ; but He in twelve found faith
> In all save one ; I in twelve thousand none
>
> (Act iv. 1)

In the last scene of the Third Part of *Henry. VI,* the detested Richard Crookback, is made by Shakespeare to enact the very part of Judas, himself saying in an aside

> So Judas kissed his Master,
> And cried All hail—so as he meant—all harm.

The colour of Judas's hair is mentioned in *As You like It,* and the tree on which he hanged himself—an elder—in *Love's Labour's Lost.* 'Judas was hanged on an elder' (Act. v. 4). This was the traditional tree in England, as in some countries it is the aspen. In *Piers Plowman* we read :

> Judas he japed with Jewen silver,
> And sithen on an elder hanged himselve.

The stories of the Saints were still familiar to every one in Shakespeare's England. A

bitter opponent has described the mediæval world of pageantry and the fair procession of the saints in lines which curiously betray the fascination which it had even for those who destroyed it.

Christ's Passion here derided is with sundry masks and plays,
Fair Ursula with her maidens all doth pass amid the ways,
And valiant George with spear thou killest the dreadful dragon here ;
The devils' house is drawn about wherein there doth appear
A wondrous sort of damned sprites, with foul and fearful look ;
Great Christopher doth wade and pass with Christ amid the brook,
There walketh Catherine with her sword in hand and cruel wheel,
Sebastian full of feathered shafts the dint of dart doth feel.

To give only one example of Shakespeare's familiarity with these stories and the way he refers to the most obscure and little known of them with an easy assurance that the point will not be missed by his audience. The Dauphin Charles says of La Pucelle

> Helen, the mother of great Constantine
> Nor yet St Philip's daughters were like thee.
> (1 *Henry VI*, i. 2)

These were the two daughters of St Philip the Apostle, who accompanied him to

Hieropolis, where he slew the great dragon. After his martyrdom at the age of eighty-seven they lived many years in the city, teaching the faith to the people, and at last were buried one on the right hand of their father, and the other on his left. The most minute details in the plays are significant of the poet's acquaintance with all this saintly lore. When Horatio says 'There's no offence, my lord,' and Hamlet replies

> Yes, by St Patrick, but there is, Horatio
> (Act i. 1)

in the scene after the appearance of the Ghost, the oath is not a mere random exclamation. It refers no doubt to the 'Purgatory of St Patrick,' which was one of the great sources of the mediæval doctrine as to the state of departed souls.

Shakespeare is a perfect mine of traditional Christian folk-lore and custom. We can scarcely read ten lines of his without coming upon something of the sort, if it is only a jest about the Apostle spoons at a christening. The lines in *Hamlet* which enshrine the old beliefs about Christmas are too hackneyed to need quoting. 'A chrisom child' is an old English phrase which occurs in the scene

where Mrs Quickly describes the death of Falstaff, 'he went away as it had been any chrisom child' (*Henry V.* ii. 1). In this connection I admit we get a glimpse of Mrs Malaprop as she existed in the fifteenth century; 'he's in Arthur's bosom if ever any man went to Arthur's bosom.' It would be interesting to know when the phrase 'a chrisom child' died out of spoken English. The chrisom of the early Church was a white robe with a purple border. This became afterwards a white cloth. 'Here, the priest shall place a white cloth upon the child's head,' is the ritual direction in the office books. I have often watched a christening in some church in France, and seen the priest place the child's white cap on its head at the words 'Receive this white garment.' The chrisom vanishes from English literature in the seventeenth century, until the 'maid who kept her chrisom white' appears again in Keble. To give another example. When the Clerk of Chatham is brought before Jack Cade and his followers they ask him his name He replies 'Emmanuel,' and he is told

> They use to write it at the top of letters,
> It will go hard with you.
>
> (1 *Henry VI*, iv. 2)

This refers to the custom of placing the Names of the Saviour, 'Jesus' 'Emmanuel,' and the like, at the beginning of the alphabet from which children learned their letters. The inference is that anyone suspected, on whatever ground, of knowing how to read will probably be hanged. Clarence again refers to the alphabet by its old name of 'the cross-row.' He says of his brother Gloster that he

> from the cross-row plucks the letter G.
> (*Rich. III.* 1)

It was called the cross-row because the sign of the Cross was placed first in the row of letters. The irony of the Tuscan phrase, 'mander via uno segnato e benedetto'—'to send anyone away signed and blessed,' seems to have been not unknown in old England. So we find, in the *Comedy of Errors*,

> ADRIANA: Back slave, or I will beat thy pate across.
>
> DROMIO: And he will bless that cross with other beating,
> Between you I shall have a holy head.
> (Act ii. 1)

Such allusions rose naturally and spontaneously to the lips of those who like our forefathers saw the Cross everywhere. It was marked all over their lives, from the

cradle to the grave. It was on the coins that passed from hand to hand in that old England. They began to learn to read with it—it came before the letter A. It could not but be traced on the pages in which the life of old England is reflected so faithfully by the great poet of a new time who was yet the child and heir of the mediæval tradition, William Shakespeare.

CHRISTIAN DOGMA AND FOLK-LORE

THE Christian folk-lore of Europe, now everywhere dying out, was in large part, as is well known, a continuance of pagan tradition modified in form to suit the new religion. But in part it may be regarded as the shape taken by the Christian dogma as reflected in the popular mind. Dogma translated into terms of the popular intelligence became folk-lore. It has been a misapprehension, if you will, by which, however, the essential meaning of the Christian teaching has been preserved in a symbolic and poetic form.

In all ages the people take metaphors literally—they hear the vague sound of the words and do not attempt to penetrate further into the speaker's meaning. The

words, for instance, 'Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up,' would, in any age of the world, have produced on the populace the effect which the Evangelist describes. To give another example from the Gospels, all the wonderful legendary lore of the early and Middle Ages about St John came from the saying, 'If I will that he tarry till I come what is that to thee?' The story that 'that disciple should not die' commenced 'from that hour.' St Augustine says that he saw the ground rise and fall with the heaving of the breast of the Beloved Disciple sleeping in his grave at Ephesus. In the sixteenth century Columbus crossed the Atlantic with letters from the Catholic Kings to present to the deathless saint at his remote magnificent court. In this way the teaching of the Church produced in all Christian lands a vast mass of legend and superstition and folk-lore, as the sermons of the parish priest or the addresses of some wandering friar fell on the ears of the people.

In Catholic Germany, for instance, it is believed that when the 'genealogy' from the first chapter of St Matthew is read in the Mass on Christmas Eve, hidden

treasures are revealed. This was, no doubt, the meaning attached by the people to that commonplace of mediæval preachers about 'the gold of the Divinity being hidden in the earth of the Humanity of Our Lord.' This was the patristic and mystical explanation of 'the treasure hidden in the field' of the Gospel, which, when a man finds, for joy thereof he sells all that he has and goes and buys that field. Again, there was venerated at Puy-en-Velay a miraculous image of the Virgin, said to have been carved by the prophet Jeremiah. It was destroyed at the French Revolution. 'This is the Virgin whom the prophet saw,' the fervid preacher would, no doubt, exclaim, and for his hearers the transition from his seeing the vision to his carving the image would be easy, and the 'saying' would go forth 'from that hour.'

This quaint literalism often produces folk-poetry of the most touching kind. What, for instance, can be sweeter than this folk-song of Béarn and Navarre:—

Le Petit Jésus
Allait à l'école,
Avec sa Croix
Sur son épaule.

With His Cross upon His shoulder,
Little Jesus went to school.

Again, in Andalusia they sing :—

Baby Jesus, by Thy Father,
By Thy Mother, by Thy Cross,
Give me light amid the darkness
Of death's hour of pain and loss.

The idea is found in Christian art as well as in popular Christian poetry all over Europe. In Cimabue's Madonna, for instance, in Santa Maria Novella, at Florence, little angels are seen holding the instruments of the Passion on either side of the Child. This, no doubt, is a popular rendering of the doctrine known to theologians as the 'interior Cross,' the foreknowledge of the Passion the Child is believed to have had from His earliest years.

The translation of dogma into folk-lore is nowhere more apparent than in the Antichrist legends of Christendom. We have recently been reminded of this almost forgotten Christian doctrine by Father Benson's novel, *The Lord of the World.* The magnificent trilogy of the Russian writer, Dmitri Merejkowski, *Christ and Antichrist,* shows

the great influence which the idea has had all through the Christian ages. 'Antichrist' is a common term of popular vituperation in Russia, where the belief is still very living. The *locus classicus* of the doctrine in the New Testament is the well-known passage of St Paul, 'And that day shall not come unless there be first a falling away, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the Son of Perdition who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God . . . And then shall that wicked be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His Mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His Coming.' This is depicted in Luca Signorelli's great frescoes at Orvieto. The coming and destruction of Antichrist was one of the cycle of miracle-plays, but it fell out through the elaborateness of the *mise-en-scène* required for its production. It was believed that he would be a Jew of the tribe of Dan, according to the prophecy of the dying Jacob, 'Dan shall be a serpent in the path, an adder by the way, so that the rider shall fall backward.' Among the hundred and forty-four thousand whose foreheads were sealed in the Book of Revelation, none are mentioned as be-

longing to this tribe. Father Benson's Antichrist, by the way, is an American.

Antichrist folk-lore is found from Russia to the Hebrides. In Brittany they say he will be the child of an apostate priest and a nun. There is a Breton folk-saying that when the sanctuary lamp goes out in a single church the world will end. When the peasant passes his village church at nightfall, and finds the windows dark he will know that the earth's last day has come. One divines the process of the formation of this legendary lore: the fervent words of the preacher on the awful portents of the last time before the Coming of the Son of Man, the lamp of faith going out everywhere, and the people applying the words to the sanctuary lamp, first of their own, and then of any single church. The ceasing of the celebration of Mass in the days of Antichrist was much dwelt upon. The hopelessness of that last time is poetically expressed in a concrete form in the tradition that a rainbow will not be seen for thirty years before the Day of Doom.

Numberless examples of this kind might be given, showing the immense hold which the Christian doctrine had on the minds of

our forefathers, how it filled them and occupied them and suggested itself to them at every turn. To many the dying-out of dogma and folk-lore together will, of course, seem pure gain. A recent book, the *Memoirs of a Surrey Labourer*, gives a life-like presentation of the manner of thinking and ways of speech of the country people in that part of England. It has the very atmosphere of a Surrey village. The solitary trace of anything not absolutely material in the book is the mention of a Lincolnshire ghost story made by the writer to the old man, George Bettesworth, as he works in his garden. 'Weak-mindedness, I calls it,' is the Surrey labourer's reply.

CHRISTIAN POPULAR POETRY

I HAVE often wished that my fairy godmother would give me a birthday present. I do not know if anything approaching the present that I wish exists in the world. It is a possibility which would need a devotion and labour as of the Bollandists to make actual. It is nothing less than a raccolta, a gathering and harvesting, of the little spontaneous Christian songs and tales in verse, which spring up like wild flowers everywhere in Christian lands. What it would be to have them all together, and to turn from one language to another at will—the lovely cradle songs of the Rhineland, the noëls of Burgundy, sung in remote villages on Christmas Eve by simple people going through deep snow to the Midnight Mass, the wild ballads of the Abruzzi, the lauds

given to the Divine Child in Spain to the click of the castanets and the rhythmic movements of the dance, the songs of the pifferari in Advent at street shrines in Rome and Naples, sung to the rustic music of the zampogna and the cenemella. Europe is everywhere alive with these little spontaneous popular songs, often only snatches of six or seven lines. It would be a life well spent to go about Christendom gathering them, as a botanist goes through strange lands looking for flowers. One comes upon snatches of this Christian poetry in books, say, like Fernan Caballero's, but to have in one's hands, in one's own room, a complete collection of these little poems, each in its own language, Flemish, or Tuscan, or Provençal, would be to have all the songs of Christendom rising about one at once. By the songs of Christendom, one does not mean the great Christian hymns, still less modern and subjective sacred poems, or the songs and solos, ground out on Sunday night (often to an unduly protracted hour), by the gramophones of serious families. Nothing would be included that is assignable to any particular author, even such a one as il Pazzo di Cristo Fra Jacopone di Todi. A modern Italian

writer says, by the way, of Fra Jacopone: 'Nessun poeta canta a tutta gola come questo frate minore. S'è pazzo, è pazzo come l'allodola.' The sentence, indeed, is as true as it is admirably written. But such singers as Fra Jacopone are ascetic—they leave life for devotion; the popular Christian poetry is above all things humanised, and is concerned intensely with human life. It turns the life around it into a mirror reflecting the Sacred Story.

It is in this spontaneous popular poetry that the essence, the very life, of Christianity, is to be found. Men look for it in the Epistles of St Paul, the tomes of St Augustine and St Ambrose, the folios of Bellarmine and Suarez, the controversies of Hooker and Jewel, the sermons of Whitfield and Wesley, but as it exists in the world of human hearts and lives, and as the people live by it, it is here. These poems are the expression of what the popular Christianity really is, even in countries where it is inarticulate.

Christianity was the revelation to man of his own value and worth. He was of great price, not as being wise, or rich, or noble, but as being Man. To Eastern pantheism

all life is one, the significance of the man is no greater than that of the beast. To Christianity, man is supernatural, he transcends infinitely the order of nature to which he belongs. The Christian Poems are full, perhaps unconsciously, of the value and beauty of the singers' own lives. The little songs are born no one knows how; they are in the air, they flutter about like love-songs everywhere. The strength of the instinctive popular feeling of the value to man of the Christian story is shown by the fact that its songs rival in number those of any of the great human motives—the love songs with their universal appeal, the songs of wine and war, with all their camaraderie and gaiety. It is the life of a Man, a Workman, a Wayfarer, a Sufferer, of which these rhymes and ballads tell. He moves among the familiar scenes of the singer's own 'little country,' Provence or Tuscany, not in far-off Galilee and Jerusalem. In the hot September day he plucks the black ripe fruit of the mulberry tree in the meadow by the village mill. He is weary by all wells, asleep in all boats, sorrowful in all gardens.

It goes without saying that the two things

dwelt on above all others are the Nativity and the Passion. It is no doubt incorrect theologically, but it is inevitable that the wonder of the Resurrection should have made far less impression, and the far-off pomp of the Ascension apparently very little indeed. In the Nativity carols one sees the eager interest of all good women in the birth of a little child, the zealous friendliness of Christian neighbours with their crowding offers of help. In an old French noël the wives of the shepherds all come to Bethlehem; Georgette and Madeline bring the swaddling clothes, Perrette has a soother for the baby, Margot makes a good strong bouillon for Him when he wakes. One feels that at such times men folk are not wanted, and are better out of the way. The natural human delight in giving presents is a great feature of this popular poetry. In a German carol of great length two shepherds describe alternately the gifts they are going to bring. They include a snow-white lamb, with a blood-red spot on its right side, a kid with a golden bell round its neck, a hare that is able to play the drum, a kitten that is a famous mouser, a squirrel, a bullfinch, and a nightingale. The bringing of presents,

indeed, of 'fairings,' is a great feature of all popular poetry :—

What can the matter be, what can can the matter be,
Johnnie's so long at the fair ?
He's gone to buy me a bunch of blue ribbons
To tie up my bonny brown hair.

Or

Qu'apportera-t-il a sa bien-aimée,
Chapelet d'argent, ceinture dorée ?

On a bright, warm morning, seventy years ago, a little girl, who is now an old lady of eighty, said: 'It's so beautiful, it's like a Fair Day.' The Fair Day of her little country town, almost a village, was the most beautiful thing the little girl had ever seen. Indeed, she could imagine nothing more beautiful than the long row of glittering stalls lining the village street filled with little cups and mugs, and rings and chains and watches, and gingerbread. The large china figures of cats and dogs, much too expensive for her to think of buying, she looked on with especial awe. In the Nativity poems there is always such a fair going on, and not only do the three kings ride up on elephants and camels with their gifts, but the people themselves, the unknown finders

and makers of the songs, bring fairings of all sorts to Him who is love and lover and little child.

These unknown artists have been at work everywhere, ceaselessly labouring to interpret Christianity to the people, to translate it into their own language, to set it in the local scenery and circumstances and conditions, and completely to incorporate it with human life. An Andalusian ballad, describing the martyrdom of St Catherine, is a curious example of the way in which the scenes of the Gospel and the lives of the saints are conceived as happening in the poet's own town. In this ballad St Catherine is a maiden of Cadiz; her father and mother are Moslems. They beat her every day in the week, and on Sunday they beat her hardest of all. Her father at last orders her to make a wheel of knives and scissors; for what purpose he does not state. The 'noble Christian neighbours' assist her in this task, bringing their swords and daggers for the purpose. The ballad-maker, and the people to whom he belonged, had, no doubt, a very hazy notion of ancient Romans, but a very clear idea of Moors. Spanish popular Christian poetry, by the way, must be a

treasure perfectly inexhaustible. The writer cannot resist quoting a fragment he has read somewhere :—

'Where are you going, dear Jesus,
So gallant and so gay?'
'I am going to visit a dying man
To wash his sins away.
For if I find him sorry
For the sins that he has done,
Tho' they are more than the sands of the sea
I'll pardon every one.'
'Where have you been, dear Jesus,
So gallant and so gay?'
'I've been to visit a dying man
Whose sins I've washed away.
For because I found him sorry
For the sins that he had done,
Tho' they were more than the sands of the sea,
I pardoned every one.'

'Per una lagrimetta,' as Dante says; here is the Gospel.

These old poets have succeeded in doing what modern people talk about; they have humanised Christianity. These songs are the translation into the people's own language of what they have really assimilated, of what has really impressed itself upon them, and been, in some measure, reproduced by them. They are a great living New Testament of

the people's own making. For example, nothing in the Gospels has produced a profounder popular impression than the saying, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me,' and the account of the Judgment in the twenty-fifth chapter of St Matthew. The variations on the theme of the giving or refusal of alms to the Divine Mendicant are endless. There is a curious old French chanson in which a rich man refuses food to the Saviour, disguised as a beggar, saying that he will give what is left of his good meat to his dog. 'He brings me hares; what can I hope to get from you?' Afterwards a poor widow shares her crust with Him. Seven years after, on the same day, the rich man and the poor widow knock at the gates of Paradise, with what result may be foreseen. This is the popular rendering of 'Deposuit potentes de sede, et exaltavit humiles.' Here is the faith which sees in every outcast mendicant and wayfarer the Supreme Judge. These poems contain the essential, the substance of the religion of the love of our neighbour, making intelligible and possible the love of God. It would be a worthy life-work to make such a collection,

as was mentioned above, of these 'fioretti di Gesù Cristo,' pure white lilies of the valley, or blood-red anemones, blossoming in sheltered nooks and corners of every European land.

ON THE EASTER ALLELUIA

An extraordinary difference of imaginative suggestion is sometimes made by a different way of spelling the same word. The word 'alleluia,' for instance, spelt with an 'a' and an 'i,' affects the mind in an altogether different way from the same word spelt with an 'h' and a 'j'—'hallelujah.' The whole impression given by the word spelt in the latter way is of something shattering, of something harsh and catastrophic. I know not what crashing of brazen instruments, what noise of trumpets and cymbals it suggests. It seems to belong to Milton's cannonading angels. But 'alleluia' with the 'a' is the song of sweetness, the voice of joy that cannot die, the unending music of those who abide perpetually in the security and peace

of Home. It is a wild bird-note, full of the pleasantness of Easter weather. It calls up the laughing sunshine and the soft warm rain, the flowers of all the woods of April and the very melody of spring. Our insular way of pronouncing the word sounds the 'u.' It is pronounced all over Europe, as it was once in England, as if it were written 'allelia'—the 'i' being of course sounded like the English 'e.' I noticed that the players from Sicily pronounced it in this way in the Easter scene in *Cavalleria Rusticana* when they gave the piece at the Shaftesbury early this year. 'Alleluia, Alleluia,' says the Sicilian innkeeper, bustling joyfully, as he serves the guests and drinks with each in turn, when they come trooping into the *albergo* from the Easter Mass. The church is just across the square. This is a little fragment of that divine comedy of popular custom which to Puritanism seemed so incongruous and profane, but which to Catholicism is a hint of a leaven working secretly amid the hard realities of life, a glimpse of a trans-figuration of all things we shall one day see.

All over Christendom the word 'alleluia' is not uttered in church from Septuagesima

till Easter Eve. From that day till Pentecost it resounds unceasingly. *The Golden Legend* says, 'and in the time of deviation and of exile we leave the song of gladness, that is, Alleluia.' The exile, *hoc exilium*, is the exile from the Paradise in which man was placed at first, and which is given back to him on Easter Eve. In the Middle Ages, it was believed still to exist on earth, remote and inaccessible, guarded by the cherub with the flaming sword. The old Christmas carol exclaims in wonder that the Child shall not be cradled in hall nor castle, 'nor in the place of Paradise.' Its gates were again opened to man in the words to the thief. There is a Syrian miracle play, performed as part of the Easter ceremonies, which consists of a dialogue between the thief and the angel. The thief demands admittance, the angel refuses, but as the new-comer points to the cross which he carries on his shoulder, the angel drops his sword and unbars the gate. The legend was that as Adam lay dying he sent Seth to the gate of Eden to ask for the oil of mercy. The angel gave him three seeds, or some say a bough, and he was told that when this had grown into a tree and borne fruit mercy

would come to the sons of Adam. From the wood of this tree the Cross was made. The 'alleluia' is a pledge of this recovered Paradise.

The Church always anticipates, and so it is on Holy Saturday that the 'alleluia' comes back. Easter Eve is a great day for all sorts of symbolic popular observances everywhere. To take only one example: in Spain on Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday the doors of all private houses are kept fast closed. They are opened wide on Easter Eve, and they are kept open. Should a door be found closed, any passer may demand that it shall immediately be opened. This is a translation into popular custom of the great dogma with which the pages of the Old and New Testaments are filled. 'The key of the house of David will I lay upon His shoulder; and He shall open, and none shall shut' (Isaiah xxii. 22). 'He hath broken the gates of brass, and smitten the bars of iron in sunder' (Psalm cvii. 16). 'And hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us . . . for through him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father' (Eph. ii. 14-18). The open doors of every house speak graphically of the gates

of hell thrown down at the Descent, and the gates of heaven flung open at the Ascension. *Tu devicto mortis aculeo, aperuisti credentibus regna coelorum.* It is delightful to see with what a sure instinct the people have seized on the heart of the Faith and expressed it in these popular ceremonies everywhere. All over Catholic Europe the bells are silent from Maundy Thursday till the Holy Saturday 'Gloria.' In Spain the bells are taken from the necks of the very cows and goats on the Thursday and replaced on the Saturday. 'Alleluia' is the name given to all this Saturday tumult of rejoicing—in fact the name given to Easter altogether. Coloured prints of sacred scenes are thrown to the people, one of which, representing the Resurrection, is called an 'Alleluia.' In Tyrol the Easter greeting of the people is to wish one another 'a happy Alleluia.'

All this takes place by anticipation at midday, but the midnight of Easter Eve is that triumphant and glorious night in which the great Deliverance was brought, and 'the darkness was lit up by the pillar of Fire.' Easter is the original Christian feast—the feast which has carried on continuously the

tradition of the Passover, and is the heir of all the older observances and associations. The name of Easter indeed in the Latin and Sclavonic tongues is simply 'the Passover.' It is *Pasqua, Pascua, Pâques, Pasxa.* The Rabbis said there was never any great deliverance wrought in Israel that was not wrought on a Passover night. On that night the enemies of the people of God, Sennacherib, and Haman, and Holofernes, had been slain. I admit that the form 'hallelujah' is a fitting word with which to celebrate such awful triumphs. But for the noiseless victory amid the flowers of the Easter garden it is well to soften it into 'alleluia.'

The Jews themselves believed that the deliverance wrought by the Messiah would be the climax of all deliverances, and that by it death itself would be destroyed. This is quaintly illustrated by a 'Haggadah,' the recitation of which forms part of the Passover ceremonies in many countries. 'One kid, one kid, which father bought for two zusim,' recites the singing child, and then he goes on to tell how a 'cat ate the kid, a dog bit the cat,' and so on through a long series which ends thus: 'And there came the Holy One, Blessed be He, that slew the Angel of

Death, that slew the butcher that slaughtered the bull that drank the water that quenched the fire that burned the stick that smote the dog that bit the cat that ate the kid that father bought for two zusim.' I remember coming across this some where as a child and being perfectly fascinated by it. It is no doubt the original of the old English nursery rhyme about 'the old woman that bought a pig for sixpence.' A faith that is believed in and lived by is always translated into folk-lore and nursery rhymes. Nothing is more striking or more sad in talking, for instance, to Surrey labourers, than to note the complete absence of Christian folk-lore from their talk. Never by any chance does there come a turn of phrase or expression which would lead one to suppose that they had ever heard of the Christian story or that it had ever touched the lives of themselves or their forefathers at all. This Jewish folk-rhyme is a most striking though unconscious comment on St Paul's great words, 'The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death' (1 Cor. xv. 26).

Talking of Surrey labourers, I see Mr Belloc says that in the south of England there is a folk-song, sung by the people

while they are gathering honey up, which begins with these words :—

> Bees of bees of Paradise,
> Do the work of Jesus Christ.

This may be a pious invention of Mr Belloc's, after the manner of 'Parson Hawker,' or they may perhaps sing it in Sussex. They certainly do not in Surrey. To those who know the Surrey people as they are to-day it seems incredible that there should ever have been a time when they took pleasure in the thought that the bees of their own hives came from those far-off bees that gathered honey from the flowers of Eden, but it must have been so. To 'do the work of Jesus Christ' is no doubt to make wax for the altar lights, and the Paschal candle in the village church, and the *Agnus Dei's* blessed at Rome. In Madeira they will never kill a bee, because they say 'it makes wax for Holy Church.' The praises of the bees are celebrated at length in the Easter Eve services.

To our forefathers Nature was not dead and soulless, and she too joined in the Easter alleluia. In the poetry of the Bible the morning stars sing together, the mountains

skip like rams, and all the trees of the field clap their hands. To those for whom the world was not a dead machine there was nothing strange in the darkness and earthquake of the first Good Friday; the strange thing would have been for the sun to have gone on shining. *Deus naturae patitur.* Altogether in keeping with this is the old English popular belief that the sun danced on Easter Day. People rose early to see this joy of the Easter sun at its rising. The Resurrection had taken place at midnight, and the sun danced as it rose over the redeemed earth.

This brings me to the last point of the traditional lore of Easter that I will mention here. The keynote of the Easter Eve services is the new Creation, the making of all things new. The tradition is that it will be at midnight of Easter Eve that the Second Coming will take place. That midnight will usher in the second Easter Day. This will be the transfiguration and restitution of all things. The earth itself will not be destroyed by its brief purgatorial fire, but will come forth transfigured into an unimaginable glory and loveliness on its resurrection morning. Its meaning will be

interpreted; no longer dumb, it will tell the secret 'at its heart. It will be once more Paradise, man's native Country, his true Home. Old things will have passed away, all things have become new. The whole Creation will join in the new song, the endless Alleluia.

ON THE OX AND ASS OF THE NATIVITY.

WHEN living, some years ago, in a remote hamlet in the North of England, I remember one winter some Italian workmen being engaged on a piece of work in the village. They were from the Veneto. In the long evenings I used to go and play dominoes with them, sometimes taking with me a flask of Chianti to enliven the game. As we played and chatted one or another of the men would carelessly troll out from time to time some snatch of a carol or song. I remember the leader of the party one evening, as he put down the double six, gaily singing out the words 'fra il bue e l'asinello.'

Between the ox and the little ass. The words represent a tradition at least seventeen

centuries old, a piece of homely Christian poetry dear to the hearts of the people everywhere. The ox and the ass are as much a part of the scene of the Nativity as the angels and the shepherds. Personally, I would as soon lose the star of the Magi or the gorgeous Kings themselves as these lowly members of 'the clan of the four-footed people,' who for all these centuries have been playing their dumb part in the great drama. In Byzantine illuminations, in Russian icons, amid the quaint sculptures of Breton Calvaries, they are there, on either side the crib, looking mildly on at all the disturbance of their accustomed routine. In the noëls and carols of all Christian languages they are found as a matter of course, along with the other persons of the story, and the sweet legends about them continually reappear. For instance, the words,

Cognovit bos et asinus
Quod Puer erat Dominus

refer to the universal tradition that at the moment of the great Birth, taught by a mysterious instinct, they knelt upon their knees. This was the fulfilment of the

prophecy, 'The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his Master's crib.' Our own old English carol says:—

Ox and ass adore their king.

Another touching piece of folk-poetry found from Ireland to Syria is the legend that in the stable without door or windows, full of holes and open to every wind that blew, they with their breath kept the Divine Child warm that bitter winter night. To quote the first example that comes to mind, a Rhineland Volkslied says:—

Das Kind so kelt, erbarmlich arm,
Ein Ochs und Esel hauchen's warm.

This is poetry. It is significant that there is no mention of them in Milton's cold and stilted 'hymn,' which for my own part I can never find anything but antipathetic. Talking of poetry, the line

The ox and ass and camel

in Miss Rossetti's lovely carol I think always jars. The camel introduces a novel element and disturbs the picture in one's mind. The part assigned to the ox, again, in another modern poem of great beauty—

The ox, he openeth wide the door,
And from the snow he bids her in,

departs from the unobtrusiveness of their traditional rôle.

They are first mentioned by Origen, and are the subject of endless mystical allegorising by the Fathers. The Septuagint renders Habbakkuk iii. 2 by the words 'in the midst of two living creatures thou shalt be known.' The Authorised Version has 'in the midst of the years.' 'In medio duorum animalium' chants the Church in her stately Latin, and the people tell the story by their firesides, every man in his own language, and sing it in artless words in every *patois* of Europe, in Breton, or Flemish or Catalan.

The *Golden Legend* says that on the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem Joseph 'brought with him an ass and an ox.' Mary rode on the ass, and the ox he meant to sell. There is, again, a text in Isaiah, 'Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that lead forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass.' The ox does not appear again in the Gospel, though he is one of the four living creatures of the Apocalypse and is the symbol of St Luke. The ass, however, is pre-eminently the Gospel beast. He is the animal of the Flight into Egypt, and again

of the Entry into Jerusalem. It is in memory of this last event that, according to the folk-tale, he bears a cross upon his back. In Germany the figure of an ass formed part of the Palm Sunday procession. It was called the Palm-esel. The ass of the Good Samaritan, again, according to the Fathers, had a very sacred signification. The name given to him by the writer of *Piers Plowman* is 'Lyard':

> As soon as the Samaritan had sight of this lad
> He alighted Lyard, and led him in his hand.

And again—

> He led him forth on Lyard to Lex Christi, a grange,
> Well six miles or seven beside the new market.

This is in the true mediæval spirit, which we find in Dante, where everything is made concrete, and named and numbered. Lyard is, no doubt, the traditional mediæval name for the Samaritan's ass.

There was a 'Feast of the Ass' celebrated in the Middle Ages at Beauvais, or Autun, and other places. At the end of the Mass the priest turned to the people, and instead of 'Ite, Misa est' said 'hee-haw' three times, and the people answered 'hee-haw'

instead of 'Deo gratias.' A Latin prose was chanted in honour of the saint of the day :—

Orientis partibus
Adventavit asinus.

It described his characteristics, among others being this :

Lentus erat pedibus,
Nisi foret baculus.

This was the ass of the Nativity, that 'asinus egregius' which—

Transiit per Jordanem
Saliit in Betleem.

Every verse ended with the kindly vernacular refrain,

Vous aurez du foin assez

How the ox and ass of Bethlehem —particularly the 'asinello'—must have appealed to St Francis of Assisi! The custom of making Christmas cribs first became general after his sermon in the stable at Greccio, on the Christmas night of 1223. On that night the dark lanes and roads of all that countryside were light as day with the lanterns of the peasants flock-

ing from all quarters to hear St Francis preach. In the stable they saw a figure of the child lying on the straw between a living ox and ass. Cribs were from this time set up generally in churches and houses, and as the story was elaborated in every possible way, some of them came to contain a perfect multitude of figures. There is a most magnificent one under a huge glass case in the Musée Cluny at Paris. The essential figures of the simplest crib are the Child, His Mother and St Joseph, the angels, the shepherds, the Magi, and the ox and the ass. In an elaborate representation the angels will be seen playing all manner of instruments, and perhaps embracing the human figures of the scene; the shepherds, followed by their dog Melampo, will be bringing rustic gifts, baskets of fruit, and wickered flasks of wine, and a lamb; and Madelon, the little shepherd girl, will have her garland of Christmas roses. The Eastern kings will be there, in many-coloured robes hung with strings of coral and pearls and amber, with their slaves and dromedaries, and the star. One of the kings is a negro. Jews and Gentiles meet and embrace, because the

middle wall of partition is broken down, and both are made one. Perhaps a group of rustic dancers will be clicking their castanets before the Child, or a gipsy will be telling the Madonna His awful and glorious fortune. All sorts of characters—a miller, an innkeeper—have somehow found their way to the stable. God, and men, and the angels, and the beasts themselves are there together, and all are at peace. The ox and ass gaze calmly and sweetly at their many guests. They too share in the throb and shiver of joy that runs through the whole creation, and look with dumb, unselfish gladness on the fulfilled Desire, by all the world's great antiphons invoked, which prophets and sibyls chanted and Virgil longed in vain to see.

A GREEN HEAVEN

MR G. L. GOMME in his interesting book on *Folk-lore as an Historical Science*, quotes from a seventeenth century Puritan preacher an account of the strange creed of a poor old simple-minded man. 'On his deathbed, being demanded what he thought of God, he answers that He was a good old man; and what of Christ, that He was a towardly youth; . . . and what should become of his soul after he was dead, that if he had done well he should be put in a pleasant green meadow.' Both the seventeenth century divine and the modern writer, from their different standpoints, regard this old man as a 'pagan.' The preacher exclaims in wonder that he had lived for sixty years in 'a parish where there had been preaching almost all his time.' Many preachers we

know were labouring in England during the period covered by this old man's life. The sermon quoted from was preached in 1659. The Puritan preaching, however, if the old man ever attended it, had evidently made little impression upon his mind. Such religious ideas as he possessed he had derived from the Catholic symbolism, then vanishing in England, but lingering on upon church windows, and in the traditional speech of the people. The comment of the modern writer is in the same vein. 'This is a passage which shows not a departure from Christianity either through ignorance or from the result of philosophic study or contemplation, but a sheer non-advance to Christianity, a passage which shows us an English pagan of the seventeenth century. The two first articles of this singular creed depict an absence of knowledge about the central features of Christian belief, the last denotes the existence of knowledge about some belief not known to English scholars of that time.' He adds the further remark: 'This seventeenth century pagan depended upon himself for his faith. He worked out his own ideas as to Heaven and God and Christ.'

But let us examine the old man's creed a little more closely. With its first two articles we are not here concerned. He conceived of God, dimly and obscurely, no doubt, as 'a good old man,' the 'Ancient of Days' of the Bible 'with garment white as snow, and the hairs of his head like the pure wool.' So the Creator had been continually represented by Christian iconography all through the Middle Ages. The Padre Eterno is so depicted at the present day in Italian wayside shrines. His mental image of the Saviour was evidently that of a youth 'goodly to look at,' friendly and helpful, a cheery face to meet at the end of a long day. This seems a lingering on of the idea of 'the beautiful shepherd,' the boyish, beardless figure of the Catacombs, which in the Middle Ages had given place to the images of the agonised sufferer and the awful judge. However imperfect as theological conceptions, these are Christian images left in the old man's mind as the result of a long tradition. With regard to the third point, the 'pleasant green meadow' is simply a translation of the *Paradisi semper amœna virentia* of the old Prayers for the Dying. It was just precisely what Christian

men on their deathbeds had for centuries been bidden to hope for. It was no pagan survival, but a dim reminiscence of the ancient language of the Church.

Christianity came from the parched, torrid East, often a shadowless and weary land, a barren and dry land where no water is. All pleasure, all delight, is symbolised in the East by a garden. Man's unhappiness was caused by the loss of a garden where he was placed at first. 'He shall feed me in a green pasture,' 'He shall lead me forth beside the waters of comfort,' was the delightful image of all refreshment and peace. The Bible is full of the pleasantness of springing waters and green grass. 'The parched ground shall become a pool and the thirsty land springs of water; in the place of dragons where each lay shall be grass with reeds and rushes' (Is. xxxv. 7). The *Golden Legend* thus describes the Paradise which Adam lost: 'Paradise was made the third day of creation, and was beset by herbs, plants, and trees, and is a place of most mirth and joy. In the midst thereof be set two trees, that is, the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And there is a well which casteth out water for to water

the herbs and trees of Paradise. This well is the mother of all waters.' . . . Around the regaining of this lost Paradise, this green 'place of refreshment, light, and peace,' the whole Christian drama revolved. 'To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise,' it was said to the thief.

The ancient liturgies carry on this imagery of Paradise in the commemoration of the dead. 'Bring them in and collect them in a place of greenness, by the waters of comfort, in the paradise of pleasure, where grief and misery and sighing are banished,' they pray. Here is the old man's 'green meadow.' It belongs to the earliest Christianity. It is in those prayers, which it is impossible to hear or read unmoved, which in the Catacombs brought sweetness to the beaten slave. These prayers were said from Spain to Malabar. The expressions occur constantly 'in the paradise of joy,' 'in the tabernacles of light,' 'in quiet dwelling places.' The ideas always are light, greenness, quiet. The form in the present Roman Mass is, 'To these, O Lord, and to all who rest in Christ, grant a place of refreshment, light and peace.' We cannot wonder that these delightful images made

a profound impression on the people everywhere. This impression is quite universal in Christendom. The ordinary Russian prayer for the departed is, 'Grant him, O Lord, a quiet place, a grassy place.' The scene of the Van Eyck triptych of the 'Adoration of the Lamb' at Ghent, is precisely 'a green meadow' starred with gentian and with narcissus. It will be remembered that the great poets of heathendom were seen by Dante in 'un pratodi fresca verdura' (*Inf.* iv. iii.). In the mediæval doctrine even the pagans who 'had done well,' whatever else they lost, did not miss their 'green meadow.' There was water, too, in that first circle of Dante's hell. 'Un bel fiumicello' surrounded the 'noble castle' in which they dwelt. Mr Gomme, in a footnote, says, 'One is reminded of the famous Shakespearean emendation, whereby Falstaff, on his deathbed, 'babbled o' green fields.' Shakespeare knew the Christian tradition thoroughly, and it is very probable that the poet imagined the dying man as repeating snatches of the commendatory prayers. The tradition survived in English Puritanism. It is found, for instance, in Dr Watts,

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand dressed in living green ;
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between.

I remember as a child delighting in these lines. The whole hymn has in it the true enchantment of poetry.

In Protestant countries, as the old offices were no longer used, and the Apocalypse was read by the people in the vulgar tongue, the idea of the golden city, for the most part, took the place of that of the green meadow. But the latter image is surely the more appealing. God made the country and man made the town. Amid some baking wilderness of bricks and mortar it is a refreshment even to think of a green alpine meadow starred with crocuses. Amid the deafening noises of the arid streets, the quiet of the country seems the very blessed 'requies' of the old prayers. 'Herbs and flowers and trees' are the most beautiful and health-giving things the mind can conceive. The scent, for instance, of lavender, of a bean field in flower, of July lime trees, may well seem something escaped from Paradise, a proof to men that the lost garden still exists on earth. The popular hymns of the day

may describe their scenes of garish splendour, but there must be numberless simple souls who still think of heaven in the old world way. There are exiles from the country 'in London, that town built ill,' there are inarticulate peasants like the poor old 'seventeenth century pagan,' there are rogues and vagabonds, not very familiar with printed Bibles, who still cling to the hope of the green meadow. Such a one was a gipsy woman who told the clergyman that she had dreamed of heaven, and that it was 'a girt green field.'

ON NURSERY RHYMES

IT is stated in the Press that the United States Education Department has lately recommended that fairy tales should no longer be read in the schools. One can form no guess as to the composition of this earnest band of workers; but by this example we may judge of the deadly nature of their work. Their *métier* would seem to be the lessening of the joy of the world, the taking from generations yet unborn the capacity for wonder, the power to take a large, unselfish interest in the spectacle of things, the putting them more than ever at the mercy of small private cares. The only imaginative relief from these for the great mass of the people under the fostering care of these educationalists will be found chiefly in the brutalities of the Sunday newspaper, and

the worthless 'facts' of the American equivalents of *Scraps* and *Answers*. One would have thought that glory and loveliness fled away from the modern world fast enough without being hustled to hasten their flight, and that the type of mind which prefers the contemplation, say, of a motor-car to that of a rainbow, is not in the United States in any need of protection from the deleterious influence of fantasy. But it seems otherwise to the gods of the American educational Olympus.

It looks as though America were taking measures against the danger of producing a poet. Once or twice in a generation a child is born with a generous capacity for detachment, an impersonal delight in the beauty of the world, apart from any private considerations of interest or gain. Then 'some evening at an Ionian festival or morning amid the Sabine hills,' without effort, without struggle, the sights and sounds of Nature are reflected in lovely words in the clear mirror of the poet's mind.

But if it is the intention to guard against this danger, not only fairy tales in the school, but nursery rhymes in the home, should be banned. A nursery rhyme is the most sane,

the most unselfish thing in the world. It calls up some delightful image, a little nut tree with a silver walnut and a golden pear, some romantic adventure, a voyage of the Infanta of Spain, only for the child's delight and liberation from the bondage of unseeing dulness. It brings before its mind the quintessence of some good thing. 'The little dog laughed to see such sport.' There is the soul of good humour, of sanity, of health in the laughter of the innocently wicked little dog. It is the laughter of pure frolic, without unkindness. To have laughed with the little dog as a child is the best preservative against mirthless laughter in later years—the hoarse laugh of brutality, the ugly laughter of spite, the acrid laughter of fanaticism. The world of nursery rhymes, the world of 'old Mrs Slipper Slopper,' is the world of natural things, of quick, healthy motion, of the joy of living. It is the real world. The world of the Sunday newspapers, 'Camberwell's Crime—Mutilated Body found in a Chest,' is a fantastic Inferno. The present writer never remembers laughing at anything so much as at 'Mrs Slipper Slopper,' unless it were at the 'Ballad of Lord Bateman.' This last, of course, can

hardly be called a nursery rhyme, but one would almost rather have written it than the Divine Comedy.

In nursery rhymes the child is entertained with all the pageant of the world. It walks in fairy gardens, and for it the singing birds sing. All the king's horses and all the king's men pass before it in their glorious array. Craftsmen of all sorts, bakers, confectioners, silversmiths, blacksmiths, are busy for it with all their arts and mysteries, as at the court of an Eastern king. The most delightful pictures in the great picture book of the world are chosen for it, and evoked at will. 'Din din, doun,' says a Venetian nursery rhyme,

Tre sorelle in un balcon.

It is a Giorgione or a Titian in five words. One sees the three young sisters, with their golden hair, their hanging strings of pearls, their fans and lace. It is the time of carnations; and on the balustrade over which they lean is a great pot of the superb patrician flowers.

Many rhymes are mothers' excuses for playing with a baby's hands and feet:—

Shoe the horse and shoe the mare,
Let the little foal go bare,

can hardly be said without the small naked feet. Again,

> Patty-cake, patty-cake, baker's man,
> Bake me a cake as fast as you can—
> Pat it and bake it, and mark it with T ;
> Oh, what a cake for baby and me !

is accompanied by a play with the hands. The fingers are always counted in repeating

> This little pig went to market,
> This little pig stayed at home.

The French begin with the thumb, and say, 'This one killed it, this one plucked it, this one cooked it, this one ate it, and this was the sauce,' at the last clause drawing the child's little finger round its palm.

Who were the poets, the unknown 'makers' of the nursery rhymes, the troubadours, the 'finders' of these delightful things? Will there ever be any more? The American Education Department seems to wish to cut off the supply of them in that country. The first requisite of a maker of nursery rhymes would appear to be the *joie de vivre*. He must be alive and delight in life. The one man living at present in England who might make a nursery rhyme is Mr Rudyard

Kipling. I think the snatches of songs scattered here and there about his books are the best of his work :—

Wheat He gave to rich folk
Millet to the poor,
Broken scraps to holy men
Who beg from door to door,
Thorn-bush for the camel,
Fodder for the kine,
And mother's heart for sleepy head,
O little son of mine.

This has the note of nursery rhymes. It is not an elaborate description, neither is it a mere enumeration. It is rather a reflection, suffused with joy in what it reflects. 'Apple tree with apples on,' says the rhyme of the willow pattern plates. It points out to us with delight that most beautiful sight on earth, an old tree loaded with red apples in September. We look, and grey though our world may be, dominated more and more by ethical and philanthropic dulness, the vision is a pledge and token to us of a red glow at the heart of things.

III

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

CHRISTIAN TRADITION AND POPULAR SPEECH

'FROM now till Doomsday'—it is years since I have heard the phrase. As a child I remember hearing it constantly from servants and workpeople, a bit of Catholic English, not learnt from books, but lasting on through the centuries, handed down from Norman and Saxon times, used no doubt familiarly by Sir Thomas More, by Chaucer, by Alfred, on the lips of high and low in that Old England, when all men saw the Figure in Majesty seated upon the rainbow above the chancel-arch of their churches, a fragment of a vanished world of speech. It seems to me that every year the language of the people becomes more banal and colourless, more the language of the Board School and the halfpenny newspaper, less traditional and

more lacking in associations and all elements of colour and romance.

The late Sir Edward Burne-Jones wrote, 'I can in no wise do without mediæval Christianity. The Central Idea of it, with all that it gathered to itself made the Europe that I exist in.' It is indeed impossible to imagine what the artistic blankness of Europe would be, if the Catholic Church were blotted out of its history. There is no glint of colour, no pleasant bit of custom anywhere, but at the bottom of it you will find the Faith. For instance, here is the origin of the golden head-dress of the Friesland peasant woman: the heathen king on hearing that his daughter was a Christian compelled her to wear a crown of spikes in mockery of the Crown of Thorns, and on his own conversion, as he could not efface the scars upon her brow he covered them with a golden helmet, which was immediately adopted as their head-dress by all Christian women in the land. The Incarnation is the great Romance, the great escape into the Infinite, which broke the bondage of the hard closed-in classical world. We cannot wonder that the unearthly light altered the look of things as it fell upon them, that as it shone out on fields and ships and

bridges it gave them a new significance, that henceforth there was a mystic meaning in a ladder or a well. The great tradition affected language profoundly, and imparted to all Christian tongues an incomparable element of romance and charm. The old ballads and tragedies, the piteous laments and longings for lover and friend and child are saturated with Christian ideas and images, while the classical writers of the eighteenth century wrote a language from which every trace of Christianity had been eliminated.

In believing lands and ages the Great Figure is One 'Whose Face no man can say he does not know,' and echoes and shadows of Divine Tragedy are heard and seen at every turn. In Old England the child learnt his alphabet from a horn-book in which a Cross was prefixed to the first line of letters, which for this reason was called the 'Christ-Cross row.' At the head of the old horn-books the rhyme was often placed,

> In all virtue to proceed,
> Christ's Cross be my speed.

For the same reason 'Cristus' is a name given in Spain to the alphabet for children, which in France becomes 'Croix de Jésus'

or 'Croix du bon Dieu.' Could one begin to learn to read in a better way? In our own day a generation of people is growing up nourished on *Scraps* and *Tit-bits* who can tell you off hand the largest billiard table in the world, and who do not know a picture of the Nativity when they see it. The great story does not interest them, at least their minds do not dwell upon it—they are filled with other things. The place of the wayside Crucifix in the English landscape is taken by the board with the legend 'Beecham's Pills—the World's Remedy.'

Great as the Christian element is in all European tongues, perhaps when the Spaniards call Castilian 'cristiano,' *the* Christian language, they are not making an altogether unfounded boast. 'En un Jesús,' is the Castilian equivalent to the German 'augenblick,' the Italian 'momento.' It seems to me that the phrase has an element which is wanting in the 'in a jiffy' or 'half a mo'' of our own argot. How touching is the Spanish colloquial phrase, meaning 'to assist a dying person' 'decir los Jesúses,' 'to say the Jesuses.' There is a verb 'Jesúsear' 'to frequently repeat the Name of Jesus.' The Spanish word for a beggar is 'pordiosero,'

one who asks aid 'por Dios.' Of course, in Spain 'God' means God Incarnate, God Crucified. The Russian beggers say 'for Christ's sake'—the plea of man to man.

The characters of the Gospel drama were very real personages to our mediæval forefathers. The villain of the story was of course Judas, who was more detested than Satan himself, because, it was argued Satan had betrayed man, Judas had betrayed his God. At the present day he is hanged in effigy on each Good Friday from the yard-arm of Spanish ships. In Provence he is hammered, and is speaking generally the Guy Fawkes of Catholic countries. It was ordained that no Christian should be baptised by the name of Judas, so that if anyone wished to name his child after the other Saint Jude, he must call him Thaddeus. The unpopularity of St Jude in the Middle Ages was probably owing to his ill-omenêd name. He was so profoundly neglected that there is almost no example of a Church dedicated to him. The tradition that Judas was a red-haired man is preserved in the French 'poil de Judas.' A fiery red beard was commonly called 'a Judas beard.' Shakespeare in whose day the old tradi-

tions were still alive says in *As You Like It* (Act III. 4), 'His very hair is of the dissembling colour, something browner than Judas's.' The association of treachery with red hair is shown in the mediæval Latin rhyme :—

Vix humilis parius,
Vix longus cum ratione,
Vix reperitur homo ruffus
Sine proditione.

I have heard the exact equivalent of this quoted in an English country village as an 'old saying.' The number thirteen is again in France 'le point de Judas.'

A similar, though much less intense horror was felt for Herod, the slaughterer of the Innocents at Bethlehem. The expression 'to out-Herod Herod' alludes to the furious demeanour of the wicked king in the old mystery plays. 'Here Herod rages' says an old stage direction, 'on this pageant, and in the street as well'—not only on the scaffold on which the play was presented, but in the street also. 'Herod' is a popular term of vituperation in Russia. In Russian stories I have occasionally found 'Arius' used in the same way, though probably the flinger of this somewhat

recondite insult would be at least a sub-deacon. 'Cara de hereje'—'face of a heretic' in Spanish denotes a monster of ugliness. 'Scomumicato,' excommunicate, 'sbattezzato,' apostate, having renounced one's baptism, may be heard often on a Tuscan market day. 'Unbaptise me if I do not speak the truth' an Italian peasant will say. Modern Billingsgate has no suggestion of vast distances, and cockney profanity is profane, and like Peter Bell's primrose 'nothing more.' There is often a quaint appropriateness in the oaths which old writers make their characters use as when in *Gil Blas* 'por San Bartolomé' introduces a threat of flaying alive, or when Shakespeare makes Gloster say

> Off with his head, now by St Paul I swear
> I will not dine till I have seen the same,

though according to Shakespeare 'by holy Paul' was Richard III's continual oath. I need not remind the reader that St Paul was beheaded and that St Bartholomew was flayed alive.

I saw the other day on the wall of a country cottage the St John Baptist of the *Corpus Christi* processions, a curly-

headed boy leading a lamb in a silken string. As usual the good woman could give no account of it, but it set me musing as I talked about her rheumatism. For centuries in England as still all over the world, St John and his lamb and his cross were part of the furniture of all men's minds. He was always the living 'monstrans,' 'the Shower,' the Finger eternally pointing *Ecce Agnus Dei*. The legend is that when his body was burnt 'the finger with which he showed Our Lord,' was preserved and is still kept at St Jean du Doigt in Brittany. 'El cordero de San Juan,' is a Spanish colloquial phrase for youthful innocence. It will be said of a wicked old woman 'she would pervert the lamb of St John.'

As to the Apostles the first fragment of old customs which comes to mind is the 'Apostle spoon.' Modern meagreness gives one spoon at a christening, but in the old magnificent days, a set of twelve, each bearing the head of an Apostle was given to the child just received into their fold. They were the guardians and helpers of all Christendom. What a breath of democratic poetry, what a glimpse of true greatness, there is in the phrase common to many

languages, 'to go on the Apostle's horse.' Kings have their chariots, and millionaires their motor cars, but those Princes went on foot. Our 'Shanks's pony' is a mere play on words. The Spanish equivalent is 'el caballo de San Francisco,' which lifts the footsore wayfarer into the company of him who tramped the roads of Umbria 'drenched with rain, frozen with cold, splashed with mud, and afflicted with hunger,' and found it 'perfect gladness' long ago. It is this play of mind, or at least this occupation of the mind with great memories and great themes which is vanishing from our speech to-day. In my nursery days I remember a crying child often being spoken of as 'Peter Grievous.' I have no doubt this was a survival from mediæval days, and referred to the words of the Gospel, 'and Peter went out and wept bitterly.' It is perhaps an indication of the greater severity of the English religion that Dismas is always called in England 'the penitent thief.' In Latin he is the 'Good Thief'—il buon Ladro, le bon Larron. The 'good thief' is the thief of the legendary stories who saves the lives of the holy wayfarers, the 'penitent thief' is the malefactor jointly condemned for his

misdeeds. The one conception admits an essential goodness in the unhappy victim of circumstance, the other insists on the rigid letter of the law. By the way there is nothing in English like 'le bon Dieu,' or 'der hiber Gott.' The note of familiarity is wanting in English religion. A wine could never have been named in England 'bib franenmilele' or 'lagrima Christi.'

Theological changes are of course reflected in popular speech. What a tale is told by the Puritan substitution of 'the Lord' for the Catholic title 'Our Lord.' The one form speaks of a gift like air or light 'in widest commonalty spread,' a Christ 'nobis datus, nobis natus,' the heritage of every human child, the other of a blessing reserved for a select few, who passed through agonies of mind before they attained a consciousness of it. On this an old English writer, bewailing the sixteenth century changes says, 'My heart abhors to hear that new-fangled title of 'the Lord' instead of 'Our Lord' as all Christian men were wont to say. For to the devils He is 'the Lord,' but to us He is our most merciful Lord, and ought to be called so.' But Puritanism which destroyed so much never succeeded in wiping all traces

of the old religion out of the popular speech. The most ultra-Protestants, for instance, still speak of a child being 'christened,' of a man's 'Christian name,' though in some districts I have heard (and shuddered) 'first name' substituted for the latter. So with the old names of the Sundays, we still say 'Palm Sunday,' though even the English Prayer Book calls it the sixth Sunday in Lent. In Germany it is 'Palm-Sontag,' in France the 'Dimanche des Rameaux,' 'the Sunday of Branches,' in Tuscany the 'Domenica degli Ulier,' 'the Sunday of Olives.'

Many are the proverbs and phrases which have to do with Friday and Sunday, Lent and Easter. There is a French saying 'tel qui rit vendredi, dimanche pleurera.' Our own George Herbert says, 'He who sings on Friday will weep on Sunday.' What a picturesque expression is the Spanish 'cara de viernes'—'Friday face'! 'Souffrir mort et passion' is an old French phrase for the endurance of great pain. All over Europe the days of the week retained their pagan names, except Sunday in the Latin tongues, Domenica, Dimanche, Domingo. The Quakers wished to sub-

stitute 'First Day' 'Second Day,' and the rest. Anciently not only Friday and Sunday, but Thursday was a day of great Christian significance. The *Golden Legend* says that 'the holy fathers some time ordained for the honour of the Ascension of Jesus Christ in which our nature ascended into heaven and was above the angels that Thursday should be hallowed solemnly and should be kept for fasting, and at the beginning of the Church also solemnly as the Sunday. And procession was made to represent the procession of the Apostles or the Angels that came to meet Him, and therefore commonly the proverb was that Thursday and Sunday were cousins, for then that one was as solemn as the other. But because the feasts of saints came and be multiplied, which was grievous to hallow so many feasts, the feast of the Thursday ceased.' An Andalusian rhyme says,

> Thursdays three in the year there be,
> That shine more bright than the sun's own ray,
> Holy Thursday, Corpus Christi,
> And our Lord's Ascension Day.

When the people make such songs their minds are not blank. Thursday is still the holiday all over Europe. The seventh day,

Saturday is 'the Sabbath,' 'sabato,' 'sabado' and the like in many European countries still. The Russian name for Sunday is simply 'the Resurrection.' 'Ogui santo ha la sua festa' is the Italian version of our 'Every dog has his day.' 'Se faire marchand de poissons la veille de Pâques,' 'to turn fishmonger on Easter Eve' is. to begin to do something when it is too late.

The Easter joy, the 'Easter laughter' is of course proverbial in all Christian lands. We get a glimpse of it in the Italian 'contento come una pasqua'—'happy as Easter,' 'content as Easter.' The words are like a smile. They call up the first warm days, when nature is alive again, and the sun begins to shine, and the river to sparkle, when the pear-trees are in blossom, and the swallows are come back for Easter Day.

Of the Old Testament characters Job seems to have made more impression on popular speech than any other. He has been informally canonised as 'holy Job.' 'The patience of Job' is proverbial, as also 'the patience of a saint,' the latter referring no doubt to sufferers like St Lidwine of Schiedam or Santa Fina of San Gimiguiano.

'Job's comforters' again is one of the most familiar of phrases, and the German 'Hiobspost' means a messenger of evil tidings. The Spanish 'nihoja ni rama,' 'neither leaf nor branch,' meaning not a trace, seems suggested by the story of Noah's Ark. In France David is always 'Le Roi Prophète,' not 'The Royal Psalmist' as with us. I remember as a boy puzzling over the words in Shakespeare, 'a Daniel come to judgment.' I asked for explanations, but no one could give them, and I searched the canonical book of Daniel in vain for light. Probably many present day readers of the *Merchant of Venice* miss the allusion. But in Shakespeares' time the stories of the Apocrypha would be as familiarly known to the people as the Old Testament stories are to-day. The reference is of course to the 'young youth Daniel' establishing the innocence of Susanna by his separate examination of the two elders. St Ignatius of Antioch says that the judgments of Daniel and of Solomon were both given in their twelth year. 'Daniel' means 'the judgment of God,' and he stands as it were with Susanna on his right hand and Belshazzar on his left.

As to the Saints their memories were in all men's minds, and their stories gave names to familiar things. A shoemaker's kit is in French 'saint crepin,' of course from St Crispin, the missionary saint and martyr, who although of noble lineage worked at Soissons as the *Golden Legend* tells us 'clouting and amending poor men's shoes.' The powder magazine of a warship is in Spanish 'santa barbara,' in French 'sainte-barbe.' The reference is to the legend of the death of Saint Barbara's father, who was also her persecuter. 'When he descended from the mountain' the *Golden Legend* says, 'a fire descended on him and consumed him in such wise that there could only be found ashes of his body.' The two masts of a mediæval galley by the way were called 'l'agilité' and 'la subtilite' in allusion to two of the four 'gifts' of the resurrection body. A sail only hoisted in extreme danger is called by Biscayan sailors 'la extrema uncion.' Probably few of those who drive in a fiacre are aware of the origin of the name. The Paris cabmen formerly had on their vehicles an image of St Fiacre, their patron, one of the Columban saints who preached the Gospel in Gaul in the 8th

century. Hence the name 'fiacre.' 'Coiffer sainte Catherine' means for a girl to remain unmarried. 'Thou art too fair to be left to braid St Catherine's tresses' we read in Longfellow's *Evangeline*, that is, to be a companion and handmaid of that Saint who would have for her bridegroom only a Prince 'so great that all men worshipped him, and so fair that angels joyed to behold him.'

The fireworks called 'Catherine's Wheels' were made in remembrace of the wheel of torment to which the Saint was to have been bound. 'Avoir l'ostel St Julien' is a phrase which traversed the entire Middle Ages. It was understood at first of finding a good inn and an honest host, and by extension it came to mean any kind of happy fortune. It was 'avoir l'ostel St Julien' to find a good wife:

> Qui prend bonne femme, je tiens,
> Que son ostel est saint Julien.

St Julian was the patron saint of innkeepers. He and his wife, the *Golden Legend* tells us, 'came to a great river over which much poor folk passed, where they edified an hospital much great to harbour poor people, and then did their penance in bearing folk across' 'C'est saint Roch et son chien' is a

French phrase for inseparable companions. What homely, familiar scenes, what fire-side gossip, with the chestnuts roasting in the ashes, what old-world leisure, above all, what freedom and play of mind do such phrases suggest! How the stories of the Bible, and the legends of the Saints were known and loved! The names of St Martin, St Christopher, St Francis, were as familiar to the people as the names of Carnegie, Rockefeller, Lipton and Beecham are to the populace to-day.

The ceremonies of the Church have suggested many a phrase and proverb all over Christendom. Does our own homely 'he can't hold a candle to him' refer to an acolyte holding a candle at the singing of the Gospel? The German 'er reicht ihn das Wasser nicht,' seems to suggest the same thing, and to mean 'he is not fit to serve the other's Mass.' The English asseveration, 'it's as true as the Gospel' recalls the old mysterious veneration for the four Evangelists, and for the Gospel-book itself. Tuscan peasants say, 'Com' è vero Dio' and 'Com' è vero Gesù sacramentato.' 'Amen del pie del altar' was Sancho's phrase. The Italians have a quaint version of our 'wrong in the

upper story'; 'ferito nel nomine Patris,' referring to the touching of the forehead at the words 'In the name of the Father' in making the Sign of the Cross. The true theory of a procession (which is not merely a walk) is enshrined in their proverb; 'Curses are like processions; they return from whence they set out.' 'Le bestemmie fanno come le processioni; ritornano donde partirono.' We still keep the proverb about 'the devil hating holy water.' 'This is not one of the sins que se lavan con agua bendita, which are washed out with holy water,' says some one in *Gil Blas*. The meaning is, 'this is not one of the venial faults which are washed out by the Our Father, as St Augustine tells us, but a grave sin requiring deep repentance.' A great deal of exact theology is talked incidently by Spanish gossips.

There are two more phrases which I must find room for. 'Heaven be his bed is Irish, but the idea of heaven as a 'bed' is very general.

> Their beds are made in the heavens high
> Down at the foot of our good Lord's knee,
> Well set about with gilliflowers
> I wot sweet company for to see,

we read in the most touching of all ballads. 'The kiss of peace in Paradise' is Irish too. It means the final absolution and welcome, given to the soul at the end of its journey, from the lips of Our Lord Himself. There is in it all the Christian poetry, so endlessly dear and beautiful, so wildly musical and sweet.

I have briefly touched upon a subject which is inexhaustible. These chips and fragments of half-forgotten speech, these sticks and straws borne down the great river of language to our own time, bear witness to the immense place the Christian system filled in the lives of our forefathers, and the profound impression the Christian story made on the minds of European men.

SOME OLD-FASHIONED PHRASES

IT is interesting to compare the language commonly written and spoken in twentieth-century England with what we may call the English of literature—I mean of literature which has stood the test of time, if only of sixty or seventy years; the English used, say, by Sir Thomas Browne, or Charles Lamb, or Sheridan, or Dr Newman. I mention the latter writer because it was recently my lot to re-read his *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England.* As I read the book, the thought that again and again recurred was, 'This is the English I used to hear spoken as a boy—the English of a generation ago.' The vocabulary is infinitely richer and more varied. A steady process seems to have set in of the elimination of all but strictly utilitarian

words. There is a dying out in speech of all that is contemplative and leisurely, as well as of all picturesqueness of thought and expression.

Let anyone who doubts this read a leading article in any newspaper of to-day, and then a page or two of Dr Newman's written, say, in 1850, and note the kind of words used in each—not the style, but the bare words. The newspaper English is the English of people up to their eyes in work and in a tearing hurry. Any word implying remote and tranquil detachment of mind has little chance of survival in the England of to-day. There are words used constantly a generation ago which are almost never heard, and very seldom written, at the present time. To give an example: five and twenty years ago the word 'whimsical' was the commonest of words. The experience of others may be different, but the writer is confident he has not heard it cross any human lips for the last fifteen years. It is the word of the people who have time to watch the human spectacle, and to be amused by it, and who look on life with kindly eyes. Open one of the old essayists or playwrights or divines at random, and you are

almost sure to come across it. Let us give an instance from our own experience. After hunting through the daily papers day by day for a week in search of it—of course, in vain—on the Saturday the writer attended a school 'speech day,' settled himself in his place to listen to the elocution of Revely Major and Bridges Minor, and they had not gone on for five minutes before he pricked up his ears. 'The whimsical old fellow,' said Sir Charles Surface. Open a volume of Smollett, and it is literally the first word that catches the eye. A leisurely word belonging to a leisurely world—a world of stage coaches, and strolling players, and country inns, and gray college walls with much snap-dragon growing upon them. In such a world the old word-jewellers exercised their craft.

There existed in Victorian England a treasure of vivid and picturesque colloquial speech, which is either altogether lost, or is well on the way to be so. It may not be without interest to note some of the proverbial phrases which were in constant use thirty years ago. Many of them, of course, are still to be heard, though always more rarely. 'Blind man's holiday,' an

old woman would say, as she laid down her knitting in the twilight. (Talking of twilight, the French 'entre chien et loup' is a wonderful phrase. No doubt in Old France, as in India to-day, the domestic animals were abroad in the daytime, the beasts of prey at night. 'A wolf of the evenings shall spoil them,' the Bible says.) Again, a crying child would be spoken of as 'Peter Grievous.' One phrase of Dr Newman's carried me back to my earliest days. We forget the context — he is probably talking of the impenetrability of heretics—but he says 'it is piercing to think,' where a writer of to-day would say 'it is shocking' or 'it is distressing.' How much duller and tamer the new phrases are! It seems to me as I look back that there was thrown over ordinary talk a tinge of romance and faëry altogether lacking in the hard, practical speech of to-day. 'The Man in the Moon,' 'the Flying Dutchman,' 'the Wandering Jew' were all frequently referred to. A circus clown was a 'Merry Andrew'—an altogether delightful word—'Pleasuring' was a beautiful word for the banal 'trip,' 'treat,' or 'outing' of to-day.

An exclamation in very common use was,

'Oh! my stars and garters.' Another, not so common, was, 'Deuce and trey.' This, probably, proves, as against Skeat, that 'the deuce' is not a perversion of 'Deus,' a mediæval oath, but is connected with cards or dice. It was possibly originally the angry exclamation of someone to whom the lowest card in the pack had been dealt, and so 'What the deuce' came to mean 'The Diamine.' 'What the devil,' 'Was Henker,' 'What the hangman' is the German phrase. Nothing is more striking than the way in which the old humourous, half-terrified, half-contemptuous, not altogether unkindly, way of speaking about the devil has vanished from the popular speech. He was 'Old Nick,' 'Old Harry,' 'the Old Gentleman,' in the South of England, 'Auld Nickie Ben' in Scotland, 'T' auld 'un,' 'T' auld lad' in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Norman and Breton peasants spoke of him as 'l'Autre.' He was 'Janicot' in Provence. An all Platt-Deutsch phrase was 'Der leidige Gottseibeiuns.' But now, at any rate in England, the hungry generations of the board schools tread him down, and the old half-affectionate appellations for 'The Other,' the grudging elder brother of

mankind, are heard no more. It always pleases one to hear, as one still sometimes does the vivacious 'Fiddlestick,' instead of the merely irritated 'Nonsense.' The drearily monotonous 'What time is it?' has altogether supplanted the Shakespearean 'What's o'clock?' which at once calls up a concrete image.

It is many years since the writer heard anybody say, 'Up to snuff,' at one time the most everyday of phrases. It would be said of a quick-tempered man, 'He's too hot to wear a sword'—a delightfully picturesque expression which used to bring all Dumas before my wondering eyes. 'At daggers drawn' still transports one to the days of the King Maker as often as one hears it. 'To puff like a grampus' called up the 'Gran pez' of Spanish sailors, puffing and tumbling in blue tropic seas. 'By the Lord Harry' must surely have come down from the blythe days of Prince Hal. The writer remembers when it was a common expression. Frequent references to 'a rod in pickle' and 'the dunce's cap' recalled the wholesome discipline of bygone times. At the present day one might as well look for a san benito as for

a dunce's cap in one of our elementary schools. The picturesque old-world methods have given way to what is probably called 'scientific penology.' 'His trumpeter's dead' may still be heard in lonely farmhouses, and where gossips meet in out-of-the-way market towns. It smacks of Petworth market day. One sees the little pompous, strutting figure, attended by the solemn functionary in his slashed coat of black and red, with the trumpet, and then one hears the shrill blast. The three words are a picture in themselves, and form an amazing piece of evidence as to the vivacity of mind the 'common people' once possessed. This vivacity is what makes the talk of Tuscan peasants so delightful, and one may add what makes the reading of French newspapers such a pleasure. A French journalist will say. 'The time ran like a stag,' instead of merely saying that it went quickly. Of old, words were coined in this vivacious way. 'To hector,' for instance, was probably the coinage of the 'common people,' who had seen the magnificent hero swagger on the Elizabethan stage. In present-day England it is difficult to imagine a new piece of machinery being christened a

'spinning jenny.' This sprightliness still sometimes flashes out, though it was in Ireland that Mr W. B. Yeats heard the old people in the workhouse described as 'like flies in winter.' The writer has heard a little girl say to an elder sister dressed for a party, 'Oh! you peacock.'

Talking of the clothes 'as fine as five-pence' is a phrase which one remembers to have heard, though one finds it in old books. It calls up the atmosphere of Jane Austin's England. 'Pleased as Punch' is a happy little proverb, brimming over with kindliness and laughter. It would seem to be impossible to use it without being in charity with one's neighbours. A villain meditating some dark deed, or a sour, malicious fanatic could no more say 'As pleased as Punch' than he could whistle or sing. The writer suspects the phrase has never been used without a smile of sympathy with smiling. The French 'Il est aux anges,' for 'He is in raptures,' is very charming, and calls up the happy riot of the angels in old pictures of the Nativity, with their bagpipes and blythe carols of angelic mirth. The Church, by the way, borrows a Pagan shout of joy to express their transport 'Nunc cantet so!

chorus angelorum.' 'Sing with exultation,' it is tamely rendered in the English books. 'He doesn't know whether he's on his head or his heels,' is more prosaic, but still sympathetic with happiness. 'As good as gold' is still common, but is not nearly so felicitous as the French 'Bon comme du pain,' or the Spanish 'Bueno como pan,' with their wise teaching of the goodness of common things. But 'As good as bread' was never an English phrase. 'Short shrift' one still hears now and again, though its meaning cannot be very generally understood. It is one of the innumerable phrases coming from the Catholic tradition, at one time constantly in everybody's mouth. 'From now till Doomsday' was once the commonest of sayings. The Russian equivalent for it, by the way, is, 'From now till the Second Coming.' 'A red-letter day,' as every one knows, is a feast-day printed in red letters in the calendar—'a day for copes' as the Canon says in Browning. 'From pillar to post' may, perhaps, have come from the journeys hither and thither in the story of the Passion. The writer remembers, as a boy in Sussex, hearing a proverb about 'Going to heaven in silver

slippers,' which he has never heard since. 'Non si va in Paradise in carrozz,' Tuscans say. Puritanism probably despoiled the English language of the element of colour derived from the old popular familiarity with the things of religion. There is a whole class of words and phrases which, perhaps, are almost profane, but one never comes across them in any European tongue without a peculiar pleasure, as when, for instance, the after-dinner coffee is called the 'Gloria.'

How old they are, these vivid English phrases, some of them happily still familiar! 'If Herod hear of this he will anon jump out of his skin,' we read in the *Chester Mysteries*, written in the early fourteenth century. So, 'shaking in his shoes,' 'sent him into the middle of next week,' 'knocked him into a cocked hat,' are centuries old, some more, some less. The people who coined them were not dull and spiritless, but full of the joy of living.

English is rich in happily invented compound phrases, which at present are very rarely used. The first that comes to mind is 'hail-fellow-well-met.' 'He's hail-fellow-well-met with everybody' is much more

felicitous than the dull 'he's on good terms with everybody.' 'Happy-go-lucky' is a kindly phrase which might be used by some moralist 'without the heart to scold,' not too severe on the Dick Swivellers and Micawbers of this world. 'Cap-in-hand' is the very phrase to describe Gil Blas, approaching some new patron. 'Tail-on-end' is admirably expressive of wide-awake alertness. Another example occurs to me which I have not heard since I was a child—'fly-by-night' in the sense of 'flighty.' It tells its own tale of darkness. As one hears it, one is high above the town and steeple, and the midnight air is thick with broomsticks, the chariots of witches and wizards flocking from all quarters, and gathering to the Sabbat. There is a great deal of human history enshrined in these vanished or vanishing fragments of speech.

These words and phrases are full of vigour and sanity, and of a sturdy common sense. What healthy irony there is in 'You've brought your pigs to a pretty market,' or 'Your noble's come to a ninepence.' This is the speech of English yeomen. 'Trencherman' was a capital word for a great eater. It has quite gone out of use. 'Mumchance

one never hears at present. 'In the cold refectory you must sit mumchance,' says Denis of Burgundy in the very best of all romances. 'Gingerly,' again, one very seldom hears. But how delightful to hear it or come across it in a book instead of the dull and decorous 'cautiously.' Once more, 'butchers and bakers and candlestick makers' cannot be bettered as a description of the multitude. 'Tag, rag and bob-tail' is more unkind. 'The rabble-babble' is an admirable word coined by Mr Henry James. But few people invent words or phrases now-a-days. 'Thick as thieves,' 'drunk as a fiddler,' 'cat-and-dog life,' all come from the language of people with sound bodies and sound minds, who lived with animals, and danced on village greens, and attended country fairs, when there were fairs to attend.

We are often blind to the poetry of this old-world popular speech. 'When my ship comes home' is a poem in itself. It is the ship of all romance, the Argo bringing home the Golden Fleece. As I see the magic ship, it comes to a house of English children, laden with Eastern silks and oranges from Spain, gliding on some clear stream through banks of meadow.

'Neither rhyme nor reason' is a very noble recognition of the essential sanity of rhyme. 'I don't know what that rhymes to' is a French phrase for 'I don't know the meaning of that.' It always delights me to hear 'in luck's way.' It is as though one went out in the March morning, and met by chance the blithe, happy spirit, who nodded carelessly, and turned the world to gold. 'A feather in his cap' again comes from the world of fairy tales. There is a touching simplicity in the old phrase 'as happy as a king.' 'To sleep like the King of France' is a Russian popular saying for 'to sleep well.' 'A great deal of water has flowed under the bridge since then' has in it all the romance of rivers and of bridges, and all the pathos and the tears of human things. But I do not think it was ever popular English. By the way, there is no single word in English expressing the poetry of 'in other times,' 'in other days,' like the French 'autrefois.' 'Formerly' is a very dull word. Rossetti's 'yester year' is a lovely example of word-coinage, but it is not a word for everyday use.

There are some things not so neatly said in English as in some foreign tongues. We

have nothing, for instance, quite like the Italian 'detto fatto,' or the German 'gesagt, gethan.' The Russian construction is precisely similar. 'No sooner said than done' is a very clumsy and roundabout way of expressing the simultaneousness of the 'fiat' and the 'erat,' for instance, of 'Let there be light.' St Bernard, by the way, quotes as 'an ancient and common proverb,' 'Dire et faire sont deux pour nous, mais un pour Dieu.'

Let us end as we began. Many modern writers positively fatigue one by the restricted and colourless monotony of the vocabulary which they use. To read Mr Bernard Shaw's *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant* is like taking a 'bus ride in South London. One is dominated by the trivial and the commonplace. To read Goldsmith or Smollett is to go along a country road on some brisk morning with larks in the sky and windmills turning. We should like to mention here a novel which we read recently with surprise and delight—Mr W. J. Locke's *Beloved Vagabond.* The writer uses an extraordinarily vivid language, full of images. He speaks of a 'scarecrow boy,' of being 'as alive as a dragon-fly.' To me,

Mr Locke's book was like the smell of a bean field wafted to a prisoner in Brixton or Streatham.

Old-fashioned phrases are like old-fashioned trees and flowers. Amid gum trees and eucalyptus how must the exile long for some old garden, with limes and mulberries, walnuts and horse chestnuts, every fruitful and flowering and fragrant tree. Or, amid the hot and scentless glare of zinnias and dahlias, begonias and calceolarias, with what refreshment and delight does one turn to pinks and lavender, honeysuckle and southernwood. The writer is old enough to remember when people always spoke of a 'nosegay,' instead of, as we say now, a 'bouquet.' Perhaps it is thought indelicate to admit that we have noses, but 'nosegay' makes it clear that fragrance is the first duty of a flower. 'The bride carried a costly bouquet of exotics' the reporters are always telling us, and that is the right kind of English to describe that kind of flower. Language without colour, or association, or romance, is like a flower without perfume.

ON VICTORIAN ENGLISH

MR DE MORGAN'S recent novel, *Joseph Vance*, is a book which recalls the heroic age of English fiction, the days of Dickens and Thackeray and George Eliot. The book itself is delightful, but I confess that to my own mind the great charm about it is the language in which it is written. It is a Victorian story, and the characters all speak the Victorian tongue. Victorian is as distinct a speech as Tuscan, and no exile from the hills above Pistoja ever caught the accents of the *benedetta lingua* in the black streets of a northern manufacturing town with a greater joy than I feel in coming across the speech of my childhood in a modern novel. For Victorian is to me the mother tongue, full of the savour of one's earliest impressions in the late sixties and

early seventies of the last century, at every phrase recalling the world as it looked to one's childish eyes, a language 'loved long since,' and lost till found now and again, but ever more rarely, in some book like Mr De Morgan's.

It is a speech inherited from all the long leisured ages before the railroad, when impressions were fewer, and so stamped themselves more deeply, and when picturesque and happy phrases were suggested by the commonest of common things. The stage-coaches were remembered by everybody in those days, and the phraseology of coaching was still current—'a coach and horses,' 'a coach and four,' 'a coach and six' were all frequently referred to. 'A slow coach' is one of the first bits of English I ever remember hearing at all. It is quite dead now, but one finds it in *Joseph Vance*. 'Cock-a-hoop' is a phrase which has died out in my own memory after lasting from the days of the Plantagenets. 'The Cock in the Hoop' was an inn sign in Chaucer's England—in fact, in old days the sign of the inn was always hung in a hoop, itself originally a garland to Bacchus. The phrase no doubt referred to the arrogance of the

newly painted bird, in his fresh gilding and glory.

A stay-at-home wonderment is visible in many of the names given to unfamiliar things and people. A negro was a 'blackamoor.' What a different note this sounds from the *blasé* cynicism of the contemptuous 'nigger' of the present day! I remember when a circus clown was spoken of as a 'zany'—a word now only found in coloured alphabets for children, disinterred from the dictionary to meet the exigencies of the letter Z. This is, I think, a beautiful word. It is, of course, the soft Venetian form of Giovanni, as SS. Giovanni e Paolo is 'Zanipolo' in the speech of the gondoliers.

The England which spoke the language which was already dying in the eighteen-sixties was before all things a world of the country. The sights and sounds of which played a far greater part in the lives of the mass of the people than they do to-day. This is reflected, for instance, in the way in which birds and animals were spoken of, and the names given them. I have myself, once or twice, heard old people in the country speak of the hen as 'Dame Partlet.' One is familiar with the phrase from books,

of course—it is Chaucer's 'Pertolette'—but once or twice as a child I actually heard it. I suppose it would be impossible to hear it anywhere now. It is a link with an altogether vanished world of thought and feeling, a world more sympathetic and imaginative and less mechanical and utilitarian than our own. In the same way in old France the magpie was called 'Margot.' This is altogether delightful in its kindly suggestion of some garrulous old woman, an inmate of the house who is at once a dependent and a friend. There were many proverbs redolent of delightful country scenes and things. 'As sure as God made little apples' is from the cider country, a bit of summer evening gossip from a Somersetshire village deep in orchards, with busy swifts around a grey church tower. The language of the present day is as mechanical as it well can be. Things are named with literal exactness—they are given some Greek or Latin name precisely describing the function they perform, as, say, 'telegraph.' The people substitute the shortest and most obvious English word possible, 'wire.' Whatever wonder or romance there may be about science, there is none about its nomenclature.

Many phrases in constant use showed a power of observation, of finding a savour and meaning in common things which appears to be quite lost at present. Does anyone ever say 'as cross as two sticks' now, or care to notice that two sticks form a Cross? Bossuet speaks, if I remember rightly, of those who were so scrupulous that on a country walk they were tormented by the fear of treading on two sticks lying in the figure of the Cross, and there is a Spanish proverb, 'Deshacer cruzes en un pajar,' meaning to part all the straws that they might not lie cross-wise. How far away it seems, that long religious leisure of the world before the railway!

The complete dying out of all references to 'Christendom' from the ordinary speech of the people is, I think, a very bad sign, though recent developments have perhaps made it more than ever inevitable. At one time 'the biggest fool in Christendom,' for instance, was the commonest of phrases. I fear the idea represented by this glorious word, for ages so great a reality, at the present day hardly exists in the popular mind. I admit, however, that all over England the people have preserved the

good old use of 'a Christian' for 'a human being.' So they say in Corsica and Spain. In the sixties of the last century no one ever said anything else.

After all, the language of a people is moulded and fashioned by its religion. In the Scotland of the Covenanters, for instance, the popular speech must have been full of proverbs and phrases, witnessing at once to the immense hold of the Calvinist dogma on men's minds, and at the same time to the wholesome human 'grain of salt,' of protective mother-wit and common sense with which even in the seventeenth century people took it. 'Too holy was hanged' is an example of the latter. One may find many such expressions quoted, for instance, in Rutherford's sermons. But incomparably the greatest influence upon human language has been that of the Catholic Church. The references to her teaching and ritual in every European tongue are inexhaustible, innumerable. It is travelling a long way from the England of Aunt Tulliver and Aunt Glegg, with which these lines are supposed to deal, but I cannot refrain from quoting a Provençal phrase I came across the other day, meaning 'for ages.' It is

'since St Joseph was a boy.' This is one of the phrases which make one cry out with sheer pleasure as one lights on them for the first time. In a moment one thinks of the two thousand years since that unconscious boyhood, of all that has happened, and of the incalculable element which has entered into it and changed it all. Victorian English, it is true, had none of these felicities, but it was at any rate full of the Bible. I question whether in another ten years such a phrase as 'the writing on the wall' will be understood in England.

THE WHITEWASHING OF ENGLISH

LOVERS of the picturesque in speech have fallen on evil days. The process goes on apace of denuding the English language of everything coloured, vivid, and pictorial, of everything that suggests delight in exercising the faculty of speech, that is redolent of gossip in the chimney-corner, of stories told by people who enjoyed the telling, to whom the colour and flavour of the words was as the colour and flavour of wine. To the guilded youth at one end of the scale words appear to have become algebraic symbols. All mortal things to them are either 'ripping' or 'rotten.' They are too idle to talk. The poor, indeed, use a more extensive vocabulary, the booty brought back from ill-omened adventures in the unknown realm

of bookish words. But the old racy turns of speech, the vivacious, unexpected phrases are heard no more. Various causes have helped to bring this about. The hurry of the modern world, the want of leisure, the loss of the power of taking delight in simple things, the levelling influence of the Board school and the cheap Press, the sweeping away of dialect by the invading Cockney flood, perhaps above all the decay of faith, have had a hand in it. Talk that is a pleasure in itself, and not a mere hurried communication, becomes as extinct as letter-writing.

A generation ago the old leisurely, pre-railroad way of speaking was still common. Phrases were heard constantly that had come down from mediæval days, and had English history in them. The present writer remembers one admirable expression, 'Your noble has come to a ninepence,' which must have come down orally from Plantagenet and Tudor England. 'A bigger thief was never hanged at Tyburn' was a picturesque piece of vituperation which recalled the past. Margaret Roper found her father in the Tower 'in a peck of troubles.' People are rarely in a peck of troubles now.

A poor woman will tell you her worries, and add drearily 'sickening, I calls it.' All zest seems dying from the querulous talk of dwellers in mean streets and even of the country poor, though rustic Sanchos are here and there to be found. 'Here I am,' exclaims one of Wilkie Collins's characters, 'as large as life, as hot as fire, and as happy as a king.' This is not the way in which people now announce their arrival. 'A king's ransom' is a most beautiful and romantic phrase, opening a window upon vanished England. One never hears it now. A cottage woman will hardly say of her attempts to reason with an obdurate husband, 'It's talking to the wall.' Nor does one hear 'wrong in the upper story,' to which the Tuscans give the charming turn, 'His clock goes badly.' 'He hasn't a sixpence to bless himself with' is still current. 'To bless oneself' is of course to make the sign of the Cross. There is a delectable Tuscan phrase 'mandar uno via segnato e benedetto'—'to send one away signed and blessed,' which seems to lend itself to ironical applications. 'Pagare il giorno di San Mai,' 'to pay on the feast of St Never,' is another felicity of that

charming tongue. These are capital examples of happy human speech—the speech of leisurely people with time to talk and to delight in talking. To be just, one has heard a poor woman in an English village say of the good parson, 'he's always either fishing or mending the net.' A few picturesque phrases survive—'they live like fighting cocks,' a little eighteenth century genre picture; or 'to keep the wolf from the door,' a glimpse into the immemorial human past. One still hears occasionally 'born with a silver spoon in his mouth,' the French 'né coiffé,' and 'under his thumb' from time to time recalls the arena. But they are heard more and more rarely, and one feels that they are doomed, even 'as drunk as a lord,' delightful echo from three-bottle days. The French version of this, by the way, is 'ivre comme un polonais.' The Jews say 'drunk as Lot.' 'Limbo,' with its incomparable suggestion of remote and dim obscurity, has vanished from spoken English. Even 'old Nick' and 'old Harry' are going, and it is doubtful if Breton peasants will long continue to speak of 'le vieux Guillaume.' The present writer heard him spoken of the other day as 'the old St

Nichòl,' Satan thus being confused with the gentle saint of Bari, the helper of mariners and friend of little children. The decay of faith and speech go hand in hand.

Old people playing cards will sometimes let fall the quaintest phrases. The three of clubs will be called 'the devil's bed-post.' The phrase evokes an old maids' card-party in a country town, when the lawyer and the vicar have joined Miss Patience and Miss Jane in a rubber in their low lavender-scented room. The frantic modern bridge-player is about as likely to find fancifully descriptive names for the different cards as the motorist rushing along the road to pause and mark the veinings of a wayside wood anemone. One would like to think, though there is no evidence, that in *la vieille France* old-world players gave the court cards their proper names of knights and ladies dead, and that, for instance, a player putting down the knave of clubs would say 'I play Lancelot.'

Time was when in a village a stupid youth was a 'numskull,' and a generally useful person a 'factotum.' Now such words are seldom used. There is a whole class of words, each coined at first by some vivacious

mind, which at once vividly express their meaning. Such a word is 'kill-joy,' the French 'trouble-fête.' 'Wet-blanket' is a more popular version. Tuscan is perhaps the richest of all languages in these. The first that comes to mind is a splendid example —'mazzasette,' 'kill-seven,' for a swaggering blusterer. English possesses many of these, the full force of which we do not always appreciate. 'Spendthrift' is an instance. When one realises that the prodigal is spending the hoarded savings of his father's and grandfather's toil, the word is seen to be admirably expressive. But who coins such words now, or indeed what new words are made at all? The new machines must have names, and the populace cuts down 'bicycle' into 'bike.'

The dying out of religious practices from the life of the people tends more than anything else to the impoverishment of their speech. For the last three hundred years spoken English has been filled with Biblical allusions, and if the Bible ceases to be read in the schools we must expect these to die out, as the proverbs of the saints died out after the Reformation. When Christian facts and legends and practices are a

common possession, and references to them are understood by everybody, they come into the people's talk in all sorts of quaint and amusing ways. In Spain it is a most natural thing for the discontented guest to say that the innkeeper has baptised the wine, and his wife has confirmed it. To give some examples. The gigantic stature of St Christopher is proverbial all over Europe. The myth of the Eastern Church about him, by the way, says, 'There is a wonderful thing to relate about this glorious martyr, and that is that he had a dog's head.' The present writer well remembers the amazement with which before he knew of the Eastern story he saw St Christopher so depicted in a shop window in Tottenham Court Road. The Western version softens this into 'he was of fearful and terrible cheer,' and dwells chiefly upon his immense size. So in Tuscany they call a huge hand 'una mano di San Christoforo.' Again, they say 'He is so thin that you can feel the Paternosters in his back.' The Paternosters are the large beads of the rosary—the knots in the backbone. In Spain a thick and difficult knot is a Paternoster. One last example which is indeed an inspiration.

The Tuscan phrase for 'to make a long story of anything' is 'fare un Passio.' A 'Passio' is, of course, one of the long Passion Gospels of Holy Week. 'Long as a Palm Sunday Gospel,' if one coined the phrase, would still be intelligible in England, in spite of the decay of church-going, but the true 'Passio' is twice the length. The singing of the Passio, the words of each character being rendered by different persons, is a great function. One sees the friendly group of gossips, and the narrator tapping on his snuff-box, giving the words and imitating the voices of the persons of his trifling drama, bringing out each point of his village story, as every detail is recorded by the Evangelists. It is pleasant to think that such flowers of speech still blossom in remote corners of Europe, but in England these things are gone. Whatever the advantages of Board school culture, the Church may fairly claim that she is able to add more colour and variety to life.

THE DESTRUCTION OF DIALECT

ONE of the most deplorable results of universal education appears to be the impoverishment of the English language. A language learnt at school can at best be but a step-mother tongue. The sacred character of language is well expressed in that same phrase 'mother tongue,' 'muttersprache,' 'madre lingua.' Language comes from the community in which the child is born, it is traditional and local, an heirloom, a heritage, belonging to his little native corner of the earth, having the sad colour of its hills or the salt savour of its sea. The possession of some local speech, of Northern burr or the Western drawl, the remembrance of the proverbs and phrases of a far-off countryside, is a thread which all over the world binds

men to some secluded valley which for them is home. Language and land are one, as is so well expressed in the old French name of Languedoc. Out of this traditional and local language rise the great books of the world, filled with the most intimate experiences of the people's life.

Modern conditions are revolutionising this. The traditional and local language, varying in every part of England, is being displaced by an alien book language, or rather newspaper language, having no root in the soil or the people's past, utterly without colour or savour, imposed upon their children from without. The Cockney accent grows and spreads. The circle of those who say 'rine' for 'rain' is wider every year. The accent is no doubt good enough for the language. The old writers wrote such good English because they wrote the language that the people were talking every day. Open *Tom Jones* or *Roderick Random* or *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and see if it is not so. Open *Boswell*, and you will read that Goldsmith 'couldn't say bo! to a goose.' The difference is this. The old books were written in the traditional language of the English people. The English people at the present day speak

a language derived from books. We all write and talk newspaper.

The writer remembers a secluded hamlet in the Yorkshire dales, far from railways, where the educational steam roller had not flattened out the local speech. He has not been there for fifteen years, but perhaps that speech may still be heard at Richmond on a market-day. A gossip or a chat was a 'crack.' The homely people were always ready for a 'crack' at their garden gates in summer twilights, or by the fire on winter nights. To hide a thing was to 'felt' it. A bag, by the way, was always called a 'poke.' The writer remembers that this first revealed to him the meaning of the proverb he had heard all his life, about 'buying a pig in a poke.' Dialect words are mostly the sound and vigorous English of an earlier day. The local rendering of 'to meddle' was, 'to mell.' 'Don't mell of it,' a child would be told. This is an admirably expressive word. To country people all over England a funeral is always something of a 'festa,' and 'a strange funeral' was the consecrated expression invariably used for a funeral attended by a great concourse of people. 'A vast' was used as a sub-

stantive denoting a great quantity or number. 'There was a vast of people there,' it would be said. 'Starved' was always used in the sense of cold or frozen. To be very busy was to be very 'throng.' 'Jannock' was a good word for 'genuine.' Book English has not got so good a word as 'fettle' for 'get ready,' 'prepare.' These turns of speech crowd back upon one's memory as one writes. To go back part of the way with a friend was 'to set him,' 'to set her.' One remembers in particular the ever-recurring phrases of the weather. In that grey country it was always rather doubtful whether a day would 'get out' or not. 'I think it will get out,' one would hear again and again. 'Very stormy' would be the greeting on days of intense stillness when the snow lay deep. 'A very soft night,' you would be told under an icy downpour of drenching rain. Icicles were always spoken of as 'ice shovels.' The 'back end' was a dreary, colourless name for the autumn, but it was the term always used.

It was, indeed, a sad-coloured country, but one now sees, what perhaps one did not see then, that the friendly, homely people of that countryside were a community. They had a common tradition—no doubt and dull grey

one—a common life and speech. It is the community that we are losing to-day. A vast agglomeration cannot be a community. To belong to a community is to have, besides the things one feels with all, some things that one feels intensely with a few. It is to speak the language that is spoken at Pistoia, but not at Prato, some few miles away, to feel that there is no world outside Verona's walls, to long for Ludlow like the 'Shropshire Lad.' A community should have its own dialect, its own speech. In Italy they say 'ogni paese, suo dialetto.' It is one of the delights of going about Italy to find language in this fluid, plastic state. In the Veneto the hard 'b's' and 'g's' become soft 'v's' and 'z's.' The 'biglietti' of a Piedmontese railway station are 'viglietti' at Verona. The names of the trades over the shops change from place to place The 'pollajuolo,' the Tuscan poulterer, is a 'pollivendolo' at Venice. It is delightful to see that language is not stagnant or frozen, but living and variable as the sea. Man surely was not made for language, but language for man. Dialect is language spoken in the way that the people find pleasantest and easiest. The languages of modern Europe are dialects

that have become stereotyped. The Romance languages are poor, stammering, human attempts at the supernatural dignity and majesty of Latin. The country people aimed, for instance, at the sonorous 'vespertilio,' which is like the very stretching of the wings of night, and succeeded in making the delightful, childish word 'pipistrello.'

> I like the language, that soft, bastard Latin,
> That melts like kisses from a Southern mouth,

Byron says. The recollection of these facts should make our board school teachers and other superior persons less contemptuous of the linguistic efforts of our own poor.

The writer is fair to confess that there is nothing at which he so shudders as at the idea of 'a universal language.' To him there is no nightmare comparable to the idea of the whole world wrapped in one single shroud of Esperanto, Volapuk, or the English of the *Daily Mail.* 'At Faido we heard the pleasant Italian tongue for the last time,' says Charles Dickens in *Pictures from Italy.* There would be no 'last time' with a universal language, no charm of the fleeting and transitory, no change as of spring or autumn, lengthening or shortening days;

there would be always the sacred high eternal noon of Esperanto or the Anglo-Saxon and Colonial tongue. There would be no sense of the border, no excitement of crossing frontiers. A universal language would be the end of the charm of wander-years, the romance of travel. Stay-at-home folk no more could dream and fable of foreign lands as the old Norse saga-makers dreamed and fabled of the Rhineland and the shores of the Middle Sea. It would be the end of illusion—everything would be known in its reality. It would be the end of the community. One feels that an old-time community in its seclusion must have taken a new, vivid interest in the things about it, must have looked at dawn and sunset, fire and water, with fresher, clearer eyes, just because it always felt the possibility of some immense Tidings coming to it from the unknown outside lands. Thus they must have lived in expectation at the court of some far-off Celtic king, or amid that friendly company of the barbarous people who showed no little kindness to St Paul.

The ideal surely is that all possible communities should subsist in some greater unity. Mr Belloc would not love Sussex

so much, if he did not love Europe more. The destruction of languages and dialects is the destruction of Europe. One knows the feeling with which, say, in a museum, after incredibly alien things, Babylonian, Assyrian, Carthaginian, after shapeless, monstrous forms, after obscene rites and reptile gods, the brazen images of Moloch and Beelzebub, god of flies — one knows the shock at once of salutation and surprise with which one comes on Europe and on our religion—on a proud and noble European face, the broad, stern brow and mobile, sensitive lips of Cæsar Augustus.

ON PROVERBS

To the Icelanders who boasted that Iceland was the finest land the sun shone upon, Thangbrand, the drunken priest in Longfellow's *Saga of King Olaf* tauntingly replied that 'three women and a goose made a market in their town.' This proverb is found all over Europe, from Iceland to Sicily. 'Tre donne e un papero fanno un mercato,' it runs in Italian. The question suggests itself, about it as about all proverbs, 'Did it travel from South to North, from East to West, or was it the spontaneous popular expression of a fact observed everywhere?' There seems no doubt that the latter is the case. In the proverbs of all lands, the thought is the same, as the experiences of humanity are the same always, but the expression varies according to local

conditions and circumstances. 'To carry owls to Athens,' 'to carry fir-trees to Norway,' 'to carry coals to Newcastle,' 'to sell shells to those who come from St Michel,' are local variations of a universal idea. 'To carry water to the sea' is French, German, Dutch, Portuguese. 'He no more wants it than the sea wants water' is the usual English version of this proverb, and one remembers in very early days (when it was a question of another tart or apple) resenting the application of this particular piece of proverbial wisdom. 'To throw a sprat to catch a mackerel,' again, we have all been familiar with from our cradles. In versions of this proverb current all over Europe, it is only the kinds of fish that vary. The Dutch say 'to throw a smelt to catch a cod,' the French 'one must lose a minnow to catch a salmon.' 'Donner un œuf pour avoir un bœuf' is another variation of the same theme. This idea of the proper course to be taken by enlightened self-interest is very widespread. 'There is a with-holding that tendeth to poverty,' the great Master of proverbial wisdom declared, and a French proverb advises us 'to give a piece of cake to him who has a pie in the oven.' Retaining

rather than getting is the idea in the Italian 'to him who gives you a pig you may well give a rasher,' or the Spanish 'to him who gives you a capon you may spare a wing and a leg.' To give one or two more examples of these foreign equivalents of our most familiar phrases: the Italian variation of 'to kill two birds with one stone' is 'to catch two pigeons with one bean,' the Dutch is 'to bring down two apples with one stick.' 'To make an elephant out of a fly' is Russian, Italian, and Dutch. This is much more picturesque than our 'to make a mountain out of a molehill.' No doubt in all three countries, widely separated as they are, the same image presented itself to the popular fancy playing with the same thought. Better still is the Portuguese rendering of the idea 'to make a knight in armour out of a flea.' These variations, sometimes very slight, show the independent origin of the proverbs. We say, 'When the cat's away the mice will *play*.' The French say 'Absent le chat les souris *dansent*,' and they dance in like circumstances in every other European country. People of most other nations buy a *cat* in a poke—'acheter chat en poche'—instead of a pig as we do.

Nothing in the world gives the present writer greater pleasure than to come upon some quite new proverb in a foreign book, or some different version of an old, well-known one, or to find the universal character of proverbs illustrated by hearing suddenly from English lips a proverb he had always supposed to be French or Italian. 'God sends t' meat, and t' divil cooks it,' said the good woman of a small farm-house in a remote district of the North Riding of Yorkshire, who had been complimented on her cooking. 'Dio ci manda la carne, ma il diavolo i cuochi,' is Italian, but the writer has never come across it in any other language, and has only heard it once in English. Again, he remembers hearing 'to skin a flint and spoil a shilling knife in doing it.' This is a variation of the French 'gâter une chandelle pour trouver une épingle.' 'The young cock crows as it hears the old one,' used to be common when he was a boy, but he has never heard it since. Richard Whiting, the last Abbot of Glastonbury, speaks, by the way, of 'our most ancient English proverb, "the young cock croweth as the old doth learn and teach."' There are many equivalents of this used all over

Europe. He remembers on one single occasion hearing 'to give a Roland for an Oliver.' The French of this is 'rendre pois pour fève'—'to give a pea for a bean'—and the Italian 'dare pan per focaccio'—'to give bread for gingerbread.' 'An ounce of mother-wit is worth a pound of clergy,' used to be common enough a generation ago, and the word 'clergy' used in the sense of 'learning' shows how old the saying is. There is something like it in almost every European tongue. 'Dio ci manda il freddo secondo i panni,' 'God sends the cold according to the clothes,' is the Tuscan for 'God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.' The same sense is given by perhaps the most beautiful of all proverbs, found in old French and Italian, 'God builds the nest for the blind bird.' Some proverbs, otherwise universal, seem not to exist in English. For instance, the writer has never heard or read anything in English like 'Au pays des aveugles le borgne est roi.' 'To be king among beggars' is, or was, a very common English phrase.

Proverbs give many delightful glimpses into the life of vanished days. The manners and the dresses of the Middle Ages could

be reconstructed from them. Thus the German '"What we must suffer for the sake of God's Church," as the Abbot said when he burnt his fingers with the roast chicken,' carries us back to a time before forks. 'To laugh in one's sleeve,' is as good as a picture of the dress of Plantagenet days. 'Mettre la charrue devant les bœufs,'—a variant of our 'to put the cart before the horse,'—calls up at once the old-world Virgilian way of ploughing. We hardly realise, perhaps, how concrete, how full of images, our traditional popular language is. A trouble, for instance, is a 'burden,' and in Christian countries a 'burden' is interchangeable with a 'Cross' —the great Burden. A proverb, above all, is the translation of a thought or an idea into an image. Every true proverb is a quaint and delightful little picture in half-a-dozen words.

An artist with a whimsical fancy who would set about illustrating a book of proverbs would find no end of beautiful and fantastic things. 'Femme qui beaucoup se mire peu file,' for instance, calls up a girl of seventeen with a great mass of red gold hair in a cob-webbed garret—Margaret sitting glorious there—forgetful of her stepmother's scowling

brow and lifted stick, dreaming by silent wheel and idle distaff and neglected flax, before a great round mirror in a copper frame, which shows the reflection of a lovely face. There are great possibilities in 'a cat may look at a king.' The writer prefers the French, 'un chien regarde bien un evêque.' One sees the little spaniel in his basket looking with affectionate confidence at an old bent bishop in a purple cassock, in his great carved chair, in the low oak-panelled, tapestried room, lit by wax tapers in silver sconces, with the firelight flickering on pectoral cross and amethyst ring. Some truly delightful proverbs suggest not only pictures, but fairy tales like Andersen's, or grotesque *contes* like Hoffmann's. Such are 'chi ha capo di cera von vada al sole'—'he who has a wax head should not go in the sun,' or better still, 'chi ha coda di paglia ha sempre paura che lo pigli fuoco'—'he who has a straw tail is always afraid of its catching fire.' The French say, 'if your head is of wax, don't become a baker.' What would not one give to read *The Man with the Wax Head*, or *The Man with the Straw Tail*?

The delightful suggestions of proverbs

are, indeed, endless. One meets in them all the old-world figures, the priest, the inn-keeper, the miller, the blacksmith—one hears the cheery bustle of market day, the sound of flute and fiddle at village fêtes in old-time France. There is the stay-at-home wonderment at far-off places and things, the road leading to Rome with its Pope and Cardinals, the southward flight of stork and swallow, and their return in the spring, the stories of 'warm countries,' told as in Andersen's tales by nurses to children in the far North. One sits by the fireside in a house of a little Danish town among the blue-eyed, flaxen-haired children, or in some country inn in seventeenth century Holland, when the shuddering tales of the Spanish cruelties had half become matter for a jest.

Will there ever be any more proverbs made? We seem to have lost the power of thinking in images, in this delightfully concrete way. One cannot but feel that the atmosphere of a democracy is unfavourable to proverb-making. The old-time people accepted life as they found it—their business was to live, not to make laws or to reform the world, and so their interest was not in politics, but in life itself. The King and the

Court, the laws and the war, were as unalterable as summer and winter. The people did not meddle with them, and so had the more leisure for stories and ballad-making and the spectacle of the world. The proverbs, for all their frequent bitterness, are full of the *joie de vivre*.

The writer has once, at least, found himself in such an atmosphere as that in which these old sayings were made. He was detained with a sick friend in a village in Lower Brittany, and wandering out aimlessly one morning, found an unusual stir and animation in the street. It was caused by a blind man playing a flute, accompanied by a dog holding in his mouth a tin can in which to gather sous. Like the Pied Piper, the blind man had attracted all the children in the village (school, if compulsory, did not appear to be very stringent), and not the children only. Everybody in the place had leisure to wonder at the blind man, and especially at the dog, and everybody was able to find a sou for his can. Out they came from the dark little shops—Yves Bannalec and Yves Le Borgne. There were faces at every window and at every door, the crippled tailor, the hunchbacked old

woman, figures often grotesque enough, but full of interest, vivacity, good humour. It was in such a world of contented leisure and cheery acceptance that the old proverbs were made.

THE NAMES OF THE DAYS OF THE WEEK

ABOUT the ancient gods there have always been two currents of thought in the Church. Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria saw types of Our Lord *in* Bacchus with his mysteries, Æsculapius with his miracles, Hercules in his labours and triumph. Orpheus was one of the symbols of the Catacombs. The Christian converts had come to the God of gods in Sion—the God of all myths, heroes, ideas, personifications, 'the fair humanities of old religion,' as well as of all good spirits of angelic might and power. Our Lord is often called Pan by our old poets, and notably by Milton in the *Hymn on the Nativity* :—

> The shepherds on the lawn
> Or e'er the point of dawn
> Sat simply chatting in a rustic row,

Full little thought they then
That the mighty Pan
Had kindly come to live with them below.

So Dante says :—

O sommo Giove,
Che fosti in terra per noi crocefisso—
(*Purg.* vi. 116.)

But the tolerant philosophic way in which the earlier Greek Fathers regarded them had little influence on the popular mind. The ordinary Christian feeling about them was simply that they were demons, using the word in an evil sense. Diana, for instance, is often spoken of in Christian legends as 'the demon of the noonday.' The Latin Fathers and the great missionary saints who converted Europe waged against them an unceasing war, overthrowing their altars, defiling their wells, cutting down their sacred trees, so that they were driven forth as homeless wanderers among men. They who had been so mighty and worshipped with such awe and dread were now mocked as the *dei falsi e bugiardi* as Dante calls them. The Christian priests were their relentless persecutors. St Martin, for instance, cut down a great pine-tree

sacred to Diana in the forest of Tours, just as ages before, according to the legend, Abraham had cut down the sacred tree hung all over with images in Ur of the Chaldees. One cannot help remembering that the day came when the sacred places of the saints themselves were pillaged by Calvinist and Huguenot mobs and their relics scattered to the winds. But the Church soon found the wiser way of claiming for herself the sacred wells and trees. Her message to the Pagan world was of necessity sternly monotheistic, but one cannot but see how greatly a rigid monotheism was modified by that doctrine of the Incarnation which was her very life. The effects of this modification as time went became ever more apparent. The Puritan iconoclasts who cut down the Glastonbury thorn made war on the very idea of any sympathy between Nature and religion.

There is a strange colour about the German word *Heidengeld*—'heathengold'—meaning a great mass of money, probably originally a heap of buried treasure. The word seems to indicate the vast hoards left by the heathen dead, guarded by angry spirits hating to see them pass into Christian hands.

The heathen gods passed away 'and left their riches for other,' the Church took their precious marbles to build up the shrines of her saints, but on one thing they did not let go their hold. They left a token of their vanished power in the names of the days of the week.

Only in the case of Sunday, and that only in Latin lands, did Christianity gain upon them here. The new Testament name for Sunday is of course 'the Lord's Day.' This is preserved in all the Romance languages. In Italian it is *Domenica*, in Spanish *Domingo*, in French *Dimanche*. In the Middle Ages, St Dominic was known in England as 'St Sunday.' In the North the Day of the Sun, *Sonntag*, Sunday, held its own against the Christian term. In Russia the first day of the week is called by the beautiful name of 'the Resurrection.' The Russian system of naming the days is unique in Christendom, and apart from the names of Sunday and Saturday absolutely colourless. Monday is 'the beginning of the week,' Tuesday 'the second day,' Wednesday 'the middle,' Thursday 'the fourth day,' Friday 'the fifth,' and Saturday 'the Sabbath.' This may have come from the ecclesiastical

determination to root out the memorial of the ancient gods. Except for the Resurrection, this was the nomenclature desired by the Quakers in England in the seventeenth century. They wished the days to be numbered like seven convicts, instead of being called by the names of seven gods. The Judaic way of reckoning Monday as the first day is scarcely what one would have expected in Russia. It is probable that nine out of every ten Englishmen look upon Sunday not as the first but as the seventh day of the week. The recitation of the fifth commandment in church has no doubt helped to fix this view on the English mind. Children at Sunday-school and catechism frequently argue the point with the instructor who tells them that Sunday is 'the first day of the week,' and say, 'Please, the commandment says it is the seventh.' The impression is deepened by the term 'week-end,' now universally applied to Sunday. 'The Sabbath,' by the way, is the name given all over Europe to Saturday. It is *Sabbato* in Italy, *Sabado* in Spain. It would appear to be difficult for anyone acquainted with European languages to be a Sabbatarian. Thus while all over Northern Europe the

names of the days are entirely heathen, in the South five out of the seven have Gentile names. Besides the sun and moon, the gods remembered every week in Latin countries are Mars, Mercury, Jove, and Venus; in Teutonic lands, Tiu, Woden, Thor, Freya, and Saturn. How near we are brought to the Pagan past of our forefathers by the slight difference in the spelling of the familiar names in this verse of the old Scots ballad of *Sir Patrick Spens*:—

> They hoysed their sails on Monneday morn,
> Wi' a' the speed they may,
> They hae landed in Noroway
> Upon a Woden's Day.

The dominant chord of the week seems always to be struck by Thursday—*Donnerstag*, the day of Thunder; *Giovedi*, the day of the Thunderer (Jove). One thinks there must have been some sultry Thursday in deep German woods, filled with an intense foreboding stillness of the spirits of every stream and tree before the thunderstorm, when Thor smote his great hammer for the last time before he passed away for ever. They heard coming nearer and nearer through the stillness the footfalls of One before Whom they fled.

For the Galilean has conquered the days of the week. We call them by Pagan names, but to us they are full of Christian gloom and brightness. Sunday is the day that the Lord has made, the day of the Creation of Light, the day of the Resurrection when the Disciples saw the Lord, the day of Pentecost when the Spirit was poured out on the world. An old English proverb said that 'Sunday and Thursday are cousins.' Thursday is *the* holiday all over Europe. This is of course because of the Ascension. It is also the day of the Institution of the Eucharist. There are out-of-the-way places in the Apennines where a lighted candle is placed in the window of every house for a few minutes every Thursday evening. According to a tradition dating from the second century, Our Lord instituted the chrism after the Last Supper before He went out into the Garden of Olives. In the East as well as in the West the holy oils are prepared and blessed each year on Maunday Thursday. Monday is the only day left by the account in Genesis without a blessing—a fact which gave rise to a world of comment and speculation for fifteen hundred years. A mediæval writer says

that 'Satan was created on Sunday and fell on Monday.' The sad days of the week are Wednesday and Friday—the days of the Betrayal and the Cross. The Holy Week Wednesday is called 'Spy Wednesday' in Ireland. But according to the Christian doctrine there are no unlucky days. The great Friday itself is not 'evil Friday' but 'Good Friday.' Again the old rhyme says :—

Friday's child is loving and giving.

Under all the brightness of the old Pantheism there was something terrible and grim. The old gods and demons and spirits of wood and water were hostile to man. They were ironical, mocking, menacing, pitiless. In the flaming crocus meadows and the fragrant pine-woods of that old world there fell upon men's hearts a nameless fear. Our word 'panic' comes from the fear of Pan which fell upon the terrified shepherds at midday, the supernatural horror which they felt at his approach. But in that strange new teaching before which the old gods fled there was at the heart of things good-will, 'the kindness of God towards men.' There was a purpose and a plan stretching from end to end of time, from the first Sunday when it was

said 'Let there be Light,' to the last Saturday which, according to the tradition, is to see the world's end and the Second Coming, and to usher in a new heaven and new earth.

ON THE NAMES OF FLOWERS

THERE can be no greater evidence of the mental vitality of our mediæval forefathers, of their vivacious play of fancy, and their keen delight in natural things, than is to be found in the popular names given to common flowers in Old England, and indeed in all European lands. The comparison of these old-world names with the names of new varieties in a seedsman's catalogue at the present day suggests that this imaginative delight in nature, this observant fancy and quick seizing of resemblances, this joy in love and legend and sacred thoughts has completely died out of human mind. The old names of course, were coined by the people, and came from the great traditional culture which they shared in common. The new names are the creations of individual

gardeners and botanists, whose efforts at nomenclature may be described by slightly varying a verse from the Psalms, 'they called the flowers after their own names.' Roughly speaking, all new flowers since the sixteenth century are the blossoming advertisements of all sorts of Swedish botanists, German professors, American millionaires, and Scotch gardeners.

The old folk-names belong to a more blithe and cheery, a more simple and kindly, a more honest and modest world. Many of them come from the world of fairy tales, the world in which the village lad sets out in the March morning to find a treasure and win a princess, the world in which kings and cats and millers hold familiar intercourse. To take the first that comes to mind—the name 'foxglove' has in it the very secret of enchantment. It is hardly too much to say that when such a flower-name was coined the whole people was composed of Mr Kiplings who were always without knowing it or thinking about it making 'Jungle-books.' 'Foxglove' is a name that could not be coined at the present day. If the flower were discovered in the Himalayas by a botanist named 'Fox,' or grown at great expense in

the conservatories of a politician of the same name it would no doubt be named 'foxsia.' (This, by the way, is precisely the meaning of 'fuschia,' a name given so far back as 1542.) The French popular name for 'foxgloves' is still more delightful. They are 'les gants de Nôtre-Dame,' 'les doigtiers de Nôtre-Dame.' The same quaint Gothic fancy is found again in 'snapdragon.' There is a dusky, velvety flower, once frequently seen in cottage gardens, which to the present day the writer only identifies by its old-fashioned cottage name of 'blackamoor's beauty.' The soul of all the popular romance about the East, coming down from the time of the Crusades, is in the name. Southernwood is another good example of this play of fancy. The plant, with its delightful fragrance, must have brought to home-keeping country folk a suggestion of all the fragrant woods and trees of the South, of islands of clove-trees and sandal-wood.

In these old-world names the flowers are all alive. They are often directly personified as in 'ragged Robin,' or again in 'ragged Jack,' a flower which the writer for one does not know by any other name. In Fernan Caballero's Spanish romance, there is frequent

mention of a flower called 'Dom Pedro,' which dictionaries give no help in identifying. It is an excellent name for a flower, and suggests something very pompous and sumptuous, all scarlet and yellow. The 'sweet William' of English cottage gardens is a lover untimely slain, or perhaps, the boy-saint, William of Norwich, one of the Christian children slain by Jews, like 'young Hugh of Lincoln,' or Simon of Trent, who so moved the pity of our mediæval forefathers. 'Sweet Nancy' is a name sometimes given by old-fashioned country people to the Madonna lily. In Russia there is some sort of corn-flower mentioned by Tolstoi, called by the very sacred name of 'Iwan-da-Maria,' John and Mary, Mary and John.

Flowers were often humanised by being named after some article of daily human use, as gloves or slippers, mirrors or girdles. Often again they were named from the human eyes or hair. To take some examples only of this last. 'Maiden hair' is a delightful one. The Italian version is 'Capel venere,' 'Venus's hair.' The wild briony is 'Engelshaar,' 'Angel's hair' in Germany and in France 'cheveux de la Vierge.' In England it is 'old man's beard,' and in

Belgium 'barbe du bon Dieu,' no doubt from the grey flowing beard in pictures of the Eternal Father.

But one does not know where to choose amid so many felicities. The differences between the old and the modern names is that the old ones all show the flower itself, and a delighted observation of it, the new ones the wish of some individual to draw profit or glory from it. To give some of the most familiar examples, 'Mignonette' is of course the 'little darling.' To-day as likely as not it would be named 'carnegia,' if it appeared for the first time. The daisy would not at present be called 'the eye of day,' the eye of the sun. The resemblance would not strike our own populace either in town or country. It is questionable whether a sunflower would be called a sunflower. It is far more probable that it would be dubbed 'smithsonia,' 'simpsonia,' or 'proudia,' and under some such name of darkness would pass into France, Spain and Italy, instead of being called tourne sol, mirasol, girasol. 'Meadowsweet' again is a name showing delight in the flower itself, and even more charming is the French 'Reine des Près.' 'Travellers' joy' tells the same story, but the best example of all is

perhaps given by the name 'speed-well.' Our forefathers saw in the blue patches not merely a bit of delightful colour, but a hint of Nature's kindness, Nature's welcome to the way-farer, which one likes to think, often really cheered and helped him on his way.

The belief in the sacredness of herbs and flowers, as well as in their health-giving qualities is a world-old thing. The word 'verbena' for instance, originally meant 'a sacred bough.' It is curious to find that in Old England the vervain was known as 'the holy herb.' There was a folk-charm or rhyme,

> Hail, to thee, holy Herb,
> Growing on the ground,
> On the Mount of Olives
> First wert thou found;
> Thou art good for many an ill,
> And healest many a wound,
> In the name of sweet Jesus,
> I lift thee from the ground.

To pious fancy, the Mount of Olives, trodden by the Blessed Feet was carpeted by all fragrant and health-giving herbs. But they saw sacred meanings in all flowers. It is unnecessary to dwell on such well-known examples as 'Star of Bethlehem' or 'mary-

gold.' But in the old name 'archangel' for the yellow-flowering dead nettle is there not a suggestion of the lily held out by Gabriel to Mary, the stingless and thornless flower? A mediæval writer quaintly says of Martha of Bethany that 'she cured the sick with that same herb which the Scripture says she planted in the garden, in order to recall to mind Messer Jesus, when she could not see Him.'

The flowers appear to suggest no sacred thoughts to anybody now. A modern seedsman's catalogue is dreary reading with its clarksias, deutsias, freesias, galtonias, Cattleyas, dahlias, zinnias, clematis, jack manni. The dahlia is called after a Swedish botanist named 'Dahl.' The name of this eminent man does not increase the joy of the world. Who or what the zinnia is named after heaven knows. The word suggests tin. It is however, a quite good enough name for this metallic, scentless flower. 'Cattleya' is a name quite suitable for a flower so devoid of charm as the orchid is. Latin flower-names at their best indeed are hard and unsympathetic, while on the other hand the Greek names of flowers are of an extraordinary beauty. They are beautiful in

themselves and have most beautiful associations. Think of such names as anemone, crocus, odonis, narcissus, hyacinth, daphne, iris, corydalis, amaryllis, asphodel. It is impossible to tell how much of the charm of these flowers comes from their intrinsic beauty, and how much from their names. The cattleya and the clarksia can never form part of the poetry of the world, nor could they were they fifty times as beautiful as they are. But the names drawn from the Greek stories, and the romantic popular names of Christendom do indeed paint the lily and add a perfume to the violet.

BEAUTIFUL WORDS

A COMPETITION of great interest was announced in the 'Problem' page of the *Westminster Gazette*, a prize being offered for the best collection of twenty-five beautiful words. The selection was to be made from Greek, Latin, Italian, French, German, and English, or from any three of these languages. It would be a fascinating, if laborious, task to examine the lists sent in by the various competitors, and so to discover what are considered the supremely beautiful words of the world by those interested in such things. For my own part, I confess I am not greatly attracted by the two lists which divided the prize between them. The words 'welcome,' 'farewell,' 'loveliness,' 'gentle,' and 'fairy' in the first list do not strike us as being intrinsically

beautiful—they seem chosen for sentimental reasons, and rather for their meaning than their sound. This list contains at least one superlatively beautiful word—'haven.' The commentator quotes as an illustration of its use that loveliest verse of the Psalms: 'So he bringeth them into the haven where they would be.' He might have added the lines:—

> And the stately ships go on
> To their haven under the hill.

The beauty of a word is no doubt greatly enhanced by the beauty of its meaning, but there must be an intrinsic beauty of sound to make the word, in the true sense, beautiful. Mr Ruskin says somewhere that the word 'swallow' absolutely sounds differently when used of the bird than when used of the process of consuming food. This is true, but no number of pleasant associations can ever make the word 'swallow' a beautiful word.

Many competitors no doubt selected such words as 'truth,' 'peace,' 'honour,' 'charity,' 'kindliness.' These have beautiful meanings, but they are hardly beautiful words. In our judgment a double test must be satisfied—

the word must be beautiful in itself, and it must evoke some beautiful concrete image, a sight, or at any rate a sound, not merely a sentiment or idea. Most beautiful words are nouns—the names of beautiful things. There are, of course, exceptions. 'Romance,' for instance, is a very noble word, which has no single definite concrete image attached to it.

The selection of beautiful words in most instances goes first to the vocabulary of love-making. Here the result is a little disappointing. The *Westminster* adjudicator, for instance, says, 'kiss and kuss are even worse in the plural than they are in the singular,' and what shall we say of the Scots 'buss'? 'Sweetheart' is no doubt a lovely word, breathing a fragrance of tender constancy. Very little can be made of wedding words. The word 'wedding' in itself is not beautiful, neither are such words as 'sposo,' 'epoux,' 'fiancé,' 'noces.' Terms of endearment, indeed, yield some singularly lovely words, the two most beautiful of all being the Spanish 'guerido' and the French 'ma cheri.' Many names of things which should be beautiful as a matter of fact are not. The word for 'eyes,' for example, in all languages

(save perhaps English) is positively ugly—*ὀφθαλμοί*, 'oculi,' 'occhi,' 'ojos,' 'augen.'

The supremely beautiful words appear to be mostly connected with light, water, or music, and the names of a few birds and flowers. For instance, the French 'alouette' should surely find a place in any selection. It is the name, not of a bird—'bird thou never wert'—but of the 'blithe spirit' of the poem. It is better even than the Italian 'lodola,' which is itself a flame of praise. Blitheness, indeed, seems to belong to French above all other tongues. 'Hirondelle,' again, is the best European name for the swallow, better even than 'rondine' ('pellegrina rondinella') or 'golondrina': from this word, by the way, comes the beautiful place-name, Arundel. The same fresh gaiety is in the French word 'Avril.' It is the spring in five letters. 'April' with its 'p' is pedestrian—'Avril' with its 'v' is volatile. 'P,' by the way, is the ugliest of letters—'v' the most beautiful. 'Marguerite,' again, is a word of royal beauty. 'Rose,' of course, is one of the great words of the world. The joining of 'Rose' with 'Mary' in 'rosemary,' in my opinion, affords the most perfectly beautiful word existing in

any language. 'Ros maris,' 'the dew of the sea,' 'the spray of the sea,' 'the Rose of Mary,' 'Mary mine who art Mary's rose.' The names of precious stones seem often filled with a soft, glowing light. The twelve foundations of the wall of the heavenly City afford some lovely words—'jasper,' 'sapphire,' 'emerald,' 'chrysolite,' 'beryl,' 'jacinth,' 'amethyst.' 'Beryl' is a well of light—a beryl might well be the magic mirror of Rossetti's poem. The 'entire and perfect chrysolite' is Shakespeare's symbol of perfection. 'Amber' is more lovely even than these—it is one of the supremely and intrinsically beautiful words. With the names of precious stones rank the words suggesting the music and motion of water, as 'wave,' 'ripple,' 'foam.' The charm of this last word is hard to analyse, but Keats knew it with his

> Magic casements opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas in fairy lands forlorn,

and Tennyson with his

> Such a tide as moving seems asleep,
> Too still for sound or foam.

The word 'reed,' again, is beautiful with

suggestions both of water and music. 'Cadence' is an exquisite word. Talking of music, the Italian 'viola' is sheer loveliness, and only less lovely is our English 'violin.' 'Carillon' has in it all the joyful clamour of bells. One must still find room for 'echo,' 'beheld of no man, only heard upon meadow or mere.'

I have been quoting only words from English, and from Latin and the Romance languages. It seems to me that for the most part neither Greek nor German words are beautiful. I pause a moment over *θάλασσα*, but cannot think it nearly as good as 'mare.' No such word for a seafarer as 'mariner' can be got out of *θάλασσα*. From Ulysses to him who shot the albatross, 'mariner' is a word saturated with romance. The writer would, however, include in his list, *μέλισσα*, the mother of honey and all sweetness. A place, too, should be found for *ἶρις*. The Greek form *ἄγγελος* has not the associations of the glorious Latin 'Angelus' —its sound of clanging bells announcing 'Angelus Domini nuntiavit Mariæ.' With Latin and Italian words the only difficulty is to choose. 'Stella' must have a place. The line 'Ave, Maris Stella' is composed

of three perfectly beautiful words. 'Umbra,' again is very noble; 'pulvis et umbra sumus.' 'Basilica,' once more, is a magnificent word. The sound of 'sonorous' is completely satisfying. My selection of Italian words would be 'sorella,' 'fiamma,' 'campagna,' 'canzone,' 'dolcezza.' 'Campagna,' filled with the majesty of Rome; 'canzone,' a proverb of sweetness; 'fiamma,' the name of the Blessed Souls in Dante. I must not run on adding word to word, but I cannot refrain from adding the magnificent word 'Giovedì,' the best European word for the dominant day of the week, Thursday.

Beautiful letters would seem to be the secret of beautiful words. The beautiful consonants are 'v' and 'z,' 'm,' 'r,' and 'l.' The 'v' is the charm of 'Avril,' of 'viola,' of 'violin,' of 'vintage' (a magnificent word), of 'haven,' of 'wave,' of 'cavern,' of 'olive,' of 'mavis,' of 'venture.' The combination of 'm' with 'b' and 'r' is always beautiful. It gives such words as 'umbra,' or 'amber,' or 'ember' (a truly divine word), or the name of the Zulu musical instrument 'marimba.' This last is a word infinitely removed from vulgarity, a word of the world well lost, or never known, of contentment with a sufficing

happiness. For arrangements of 'm' with 'r' or 'l,' or illustrations showing the value of 'r,' I suggest 'maremma,' 'mirror,' 'merry,' 'arrow,' 'mellow.' The last is a completely beautiful sound.

The full-juiced apple, waxing over mellow,

is a perfect line.

In fact, if we want to find the beautiful words we must go to the poets for them. Such words as those mentioned in this paper occur constantly in the *Lotus Eater*, or the *Ode to the Nightingale*. Those are beautiful words that we find used by Keats or Tennyson or Dante, or best of all by the old ballad makers, who made their poems simply and naturally as the men they sang to made flutes and arrows and suchlike simple, beautiful things.

The competition for the selection of the twenty-five most beautiful European words appears to have aroused considerable public interest. A correspondence was carried on in the columns of the *Westminster* itself, and the *Nation*, the *Daily Chronicle*, the *Manchester Guardian*, and other newspapers joined in the discussion. In the opinion of one of the *Westminster's* correspondents, a

Mr James Hartley, the whole question has been debated in too literary a spirit. He writes: 'The general aim of all your selections seems to be the more or less literary appreciation of "those dedicated words which writers use," an easy, and if I may say so, a rather snobbish way, as if one should say, "This is a good word; Milton uses it frequently."' In my opinion, a word is not good merely because Milton uses it, but Milton will be found most infallibly using the good word. Mr Hartley's account of what took place when the intelligent competitors arranged their lists of words is probably exactly the reverse of what actually happened. They chose their beautiful words—I speak at any rate for myself—and then found them occurring on every page of the great poets. They are not beautiful because the poets used them; the poets used them because they are so beautiful. The beauty of the word 'mellow,' for instance, is not 'bolstered up,' as Mr Hartley says, by the fact that Tennyson wrote the exquisite line:—

The mellow ousel fluted in the elm.

But the writer's claim to be a supreme poet

is 'bolstered up' by his use of the word. When Milton made that perfect harmony of 'v's' and c's,'

Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.

he was not using any 'dedicated' words or 'literary words,' but common English words, with an intuitive and perfect sense of their melody.

The *Manchester Guardian* takes up the cudgels on behalf of the letter 'p,' injured in these columns. '"P" is the ugliest of letters," says a writer in the *The Nation.* One is inclined to exclaim in the Parliamentary manner, "Oh, oh!". What about the pretty "p's" in Shakespeare?' The pretty 'p's' in Shakespeare are, in my opinion, singularly unconvincing. The first quotation given by the *Manchester Guardian* is :—

Plumpy Bacchus with pink eyne.

I may write myself down a Philistine by the confession, but in my opinion this line is positively ugly. The next instance given of a 'special beauty' of the letter 'p' is the line,

Of dumps so dull and heavy.

Now, the word 'dumps' may be expressive, or forceful, or what you like, but beautiful it can never be made. The description of Cleopatra's barge is more to the point—'a monochrome of p's and their sister b's,' the *Manchester Guardian* writer calls it.

> The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne,
> Burnt on the water ; the poop was beaten gold,
> Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
> The winds were love-sick with them.

It is a superb picture; we remember our juvenile delight in it. But the 'p' words (be it granted the very best of their kind), 'poop,' 'purple,' 'perfume,' are harsh and ugly. Cleopatra, by the way, seems to have been given to an excessive indulgence in the letter 'p':

> Now I feed myself
> With most delicious poison ; think of me
> That am with Phœbus' amorous pinches black, etc.

The number of ugly words in which the letter 'p' figures is indeed extraordinary. Here is an assortment, and they can be added to indefinitely: 'Pig, pork, park, pun, puny, pug, publicity, pugnacious, pugilist, Pudsey, Putney, pudding, puddle, pus, pub,

pert, perambulator, puberty, paucity, pawky, pinch, pill, prig, prude, prostitute, property, prunes, and prism.'

There seemed a consenus of opinion among those taking part in the discussion that French is not a beautiful language—one writer said that by the test of sound alone 'a vast majority of the Italian words would be beautiful, and a very small minority of French ones.' I am not so sure of this. To me there seems a blitheness, a gaiety in French that there is in no other tongue. Michelet, if we remember, says that it is a fluid, not a solid language. It became fluid, I believe he says, in the later seventeenth century. Old French was solid. Be that as it may, the distinction may be seen in a moment, and it seems to me that, at any rate at present, French is the only fluid tongue. All other languages by the side of it are solid. There are, of course, great advantages in solidity (though water distributes the heat of the world), but it is certain that a language aiming at becoming fluid would at once change all its 'p's' into 'v's.' 'B' is much better than 'p,' but even 'b's' become 'v's' in French. 'Février' is a much lighter, more winged

word than 'Febbraro' or 'Febrero.' 'Fève' is a more refined and subtle sound than 'faba,' 'fièvre' than 'febbre.' In the Veneto all 'b's' and 'p's' are softened into 'v's.' How lovely the Venetian place-names are —'Vicenza,' 'Verona,' 'Treviso,' 'Venezia.' At the risk of becoming wearisome, I must give one example of a solid, pedestrian, plodding word becoming winged by this substitution of 'v' for 'p.' The Latin word for a bee (the most poetical of creatures), 'apis,' is positively ugly. The Italian 'pecchia' or 'catapecchia' could not be worsened. 'Abeja' and 'abeille' are better —they evoke the hum of insects in some droning garden full of bees and lizards. But the perfect word for a bee is the old French word, beloved by Ronsard, 'avette.' 'Les avettes'—there you have the light, murmuring wingèd things. It is sad that this word at least could not have retained its place alongside of 'les abeilles.' On the other hand, 'guépe' is the worst word possible for a wasp—it has the incredible infelicity of having neither a 'v' nor an 's' in it. A wasp without an 's' is a wasp without a sting. A superb, magnificent distinction is achieved by the Spanish word

for a wasp, 'avispa.' This word is subtle, tenuous, volatile, aggressive, more than splendid in its sailing, menacing defiance. What an admirable line of Christina Rossetti's, by the way, that is about 'the fruit-crowned orange tree,'

> Sore assailed by wasp and bee.

Going back to the single beautiful words for a moment, no one has included 'admiral.' For more examples of 'v' words, take 'virtus' (not 'virtu' or 'virtue'), 'valour,' 'valorous,' 'valiant,' 'virginal,' 'Veronica,' 'valerian,' 'vervain.' I should like to mention one word which has always seemed to me singularly beautiful, in which the beauty is one of sense rather than of sound, the French word 'autrefois.' This is one of the words mentioned by the *Westminster* adjudicator. We have no single word like it in English to express the poetry of 'in other times,' 'in other days.' 'Formerly' is a very dull word. 'Autrefois' suggest Wordsworth's

> Old unhappy far-off things,
> And battles long ago,

or the 'Barbara et antiquissima carmina,

quibus veterum regum actus et bella canebantur,' of the Chronicle of Egenhard. By the way, did the old Latin words of the Chronicle suggest Wordsworth's verse?

About beautiful words one could gossip endlessly. The whole subject of language is one of intense fascination. It is not very relevant, but I cannot refrain from mentioning a little incident which impressed me with the fact that language is life—is built up with and contains the whole experience of the race. I was one autumn morning watching the bargaining in the Cattle Market at Amsterdam. As they chaffered, the dealers held one another's hands, they pressed them with varying degrees of fervour as different stages of the bargain were reached, and the whole deal was concluded by a hearty handshake. Then I knew, for the first time, the meaning of the German word 'Handlung.'

IV

DISCUSSIONS AND DIGRESSIONS

CATHOLICISM AND HAPPINESS

THE question I wish to ask in this paper is, 'Was the sum of human happiness increased or decreased by the substitution of Puritanism for Catholicism in the religious changes of the sixteenth century?' A generation ago the very question would have seemed absurd to the great majority of English people. It would have been answered with a shout of derision. The traditional view of Protestant orthodoxy was that all Protestant countries were rich and prosperous, all Catholic ones poor and unprogressive—that settled the matter. The question, however, which I am at present asking is not which countries have the greatest number of millionaires or the largest and most crowded towns, the most rigidly regulated lunatic asylums, or the

most stringent methods of dealing with beggars, but in which countries is life brighter and pleasanter for the great mass of the people. If in some pre-natal state one could have chosen the scene of one's entrance into this planet, knowing only that one must be one of the toiling myriads, the 'dim common population,' where would one have chosen one's lot, in Scotland or the Tyrol, in some forgotten corner of Brittany or Spain, or in some great manufacturing town like Leeds or Sheffield? For any one who has seen the benighted Popish countries, to ask the question is to answer it. The mass of the people everywhere are still sufferers; the time is not yet come when they have anything like a fair share in the opportunity and plenty of the world. In the meantime, I do not think it can be denied that the Church gives them more than anything else. The Reformation did nothing to lighten their tangible burdens or ease their real sufferings (witness for example Luther's attitude to the Peasant Revolt), and it took away from them even that which they had. *Panem et circenses* is after all an admirable summing up of their real needs. They nowhere have a super-

fluity of bread, and in Protestant countries they have no circus at all.

By Catholicism I do not mean, (at least necessarily), modern Ultramontanism or the pretensions of the Roman Curia, or indeed Romanism, or mere clericalism of any kind. I mean simply Christianity in its historical form, as the whole Christian world received it for fifteen hundred years. The Russian people, in this sense, are profoundly Catholic. This historical Christianity in the last resort is altogether the affair of the people. It was they, as Michelet insists, who built the cathedrals. The carvings are theirs. They made the folk-songs and carols. It was the popular fancy which played with the Sacred Story and all that belonged to it, and ceaselessly embroidered it with myth and legend. It was they who in all European tongues gave Christian names to the wild flowers. But that on which their imagination played, and their thoughts rested, did not come out from among them, but came unto them, as St Paul says. The business of ecclesiastics was largely to preserve this for them. For my own part I am very little concerned for the priests, but very much for that which they guard. However oppressive many of

the workings of ecclesiasticism may at times have been, at however many points it may yet break down, its function has been, and still continues to be to preserve for the people the one great and abiding treasure of humanity.

The abuses of ecclesiasticism have indeed it appears to me been greatly exaggerated, and its abiding benefits very little dwelt upon. If, for instance, in some tropical island, half Spanish, half Indian, the archbishop is the only person who is allowed to ride in a coach, there is really nothing to call for the indignation and the tears the British public usually expends on such a fact. The sale of indulgences was, no doubt, not the ideally best way by which to raise money for the building of a Church, but it is extremely improbable that it ever did any real harm to anybody in the world, and the building of St Peter's was incontestably an immense gain. To have built that great serene Church, and, generation after generation, to have illuminated it on festal nights, is to have deserved well of mankind. Leo X by the way, so often looked upon as a Pagan, issued a great bull against slavery. This fact, I think, shows how

very Christian the Church was in her most Pagan days.

But to take some examples of the way in which Catholicism made and still makes for human happiness. It presented the great Christian verities in such a way that they became living realities to the great mass of the people. Many at the present day, I fear, will find it difficult to see any happiness in this. But the first annunciation of the Christian message was 'Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy.' It is impossible to receive the Incarnation and not to delight in it. Icons and missals, Christmas carols, and miracle plays are so lovely just because the people who made them had such intense delight in them. The people who made these things could surely never have been unhappy, and they did not work, like modern artists, for a select few, but had with them in their work the intelligent sympathy of the whole people. The Faith is the one pure flower of joy that has sprung out of the dark earth.

It cannot be doubted, for example, that the 'Easter joy' of our forefathers in old England, like that of the Russian moujicks at the present day, was a joy not so much in

the festivities and merry makings, as in the Event which they commemorated. In merchant's houses on old London Bridge the hearths were filled with flower-pots upon Easter day. It is a Russian proverb to say of anything 'it is fit for Easter' meaning that it is the best. 'It is a dress to wear on Easter Day,' they will say, or 'it is a cake to eat at Easter.' In our own time and country the masses of the people look upon Christmas and Easter merely as Bank Holidays, with very little, if any, higher reference. Many of their betters sincerely dislike Christmas. They associate it chiefly with bills and indigestion, and go away to avoid it. How much sheer pleasure is thus lost! Such cynicism would have been regarded as blasphemy in the Middle Ages. At Christmas all men went to Bethlehem with the Shepherds—at Easter they stood with those who saw the Figure, pierced and glorious, stand erect and living in the Garden, in the crystal clearness of the morning air.

It is a fact which I notice continually that great numbers of our own people, even belonging to the educated classes, do not know what pictures of the simplest Gospel

scenes represent A public schoolboy could not tell what a picture of the Baptism of Our Lord was meant for. A clergyman's daughter keeping an old curiosity shop did not know the flight into Egypt. An American lady novelist, describing a miracle play which she witnessed somewhere in the Midi, talks of a scene which was obviously the Annunciation as 'Christ and the Woman of Samaria.' 'Christ was represented as a young man in a white garment,' she says.

I do not think one can estimate how much human life is impoverished by this virtual loss of the Sacred Story. A country without an august presentation of religion is a country given over to banality, and banal surroundings make for depression and weariness in the highest degree. There are still countries where there are shrines by the wayside, and Crucifixes in the fields; but their place has been taken by the advertisement boards of pills in England, of liqueurs in France. The liqueurs are, no doubt, pleasant and healthful, the pills hurtful and nauseous, but both disfigure the landscape alike, and are sorry substitutes for the ancient 'finger posts to heaven.' The kind of knowledge which in England has taken

the place of the ancient lore is deplorable. I have seen a young girl on her first visit to the Continent, amid all the new scenes around her, holding her copy of *Tit Bits*, 'clasped like a missal where swart paynims pray,' and fixing her eyes on its pages at every possible moment. As an illustration of the kind of joy so common in Catholic countries, let me refer to a passage of the Spanish novelist Fernan Caballero (I have not the book by me), in which she describes a sacred dance performed by children before the image of the Divine Child, in some out of the way place in Spain. At each rhythmic pause in the dance they turn to the Child and click the castanets, exclaiming at the same time 'Por Ti.' The writer expands the phrase in this strain 'By Thee we are Christians—by Thee we are happy—by Thee we shall be saved. Por Ti.'

There is one point so perfectly obvious about this continual presentation of the great Christian realities, that I need only refer to it in passing, and that is that it must produce a sense of substantial human equality that nothing else can. The people are shown continually a Mother with a little Child in a stable, a Man on a Cross dying in

pain. The motor cars may pass them on the road at lightning speed as they kneel before their rustic shrines, but here in their forsaken villages is all that is truly Divine, truly human, all that indeed is worthy and sacred in the world. Take away the Madonna and the Crucifix, and what can remain, but the worship of wealth, the envy of it, the struggle for it? In England a great gulf is fixed between the rich and the poor, a gulf that constantly widens. In Russia it is not altogether a form that the universal style of address is 'brother,' and that on great festival days officers dine at the same table with their men, and masters with their servants.

In the countries of the Reformation the poetry of religion, the wealth of Christian magic, was clean swept away. The dogmas of Calvinism indeed, are supposed, where they gained entire ascendency, to have sharpened the argumentative powers of the people. The Reformation created a vast popular ennui, and filled it with disputes about predestination. It is also said to have contributed to the gaining of what is known as political freedom. From the point of view of human happiness, which is all we are

here concerned with, this is of very little real importance. The political 'rights,' gained amid such wearisome turmoil, never lightened the real sufferings of the mass of the people, or redressed their real wrongs. In the seventeenth century struggle in England who can doubt that the Church party were essentially the 'liberal party'? They were the humane party, the party who looked on human life with a kindly eye, and fought the battle of human reason and happiness against a blighting spiritual tyranny. It shows how little 'liberal' in the modern sense the Puritans were that among the many charges brought by them against Archbishop Laud these two were included—he had prevented the enclosure of the common lands, and he had taught that the heathen might possibly be saved.

Again in the religion of the Middle Ages there was always a possible appeal, the validity of which was recognised by all men, against the tyranny of routine. The crushing force of circumstance, the merciless monotony and rigidity of law was continually being broken in upon. A merciful interruption was continually taking place in human affairs. There were rights of sanctuary, there were

festivals when prisoners were released. The boys in this great school were always having holidays, and being let off punishments, and granted indulgences of various kinds. The beggars asked alms 'for God's sake,' 'for Christ's sake.' Charles Lamb lamented the decay of beggars; there would be no decay of beggars in a truly Catholic country. The Church had the mind of Charles Lamb towards beggars; 'their appeal is to our common nature.' There is no decay of starving, death-struck misery in the lands pre-eminent of Reformation light — but, imagine, ye readers of the four Evangelists—in these countries it is a crime to ask alms. I quote the following from this morning's paper. 'The prisoners were charged with begging, and using their children to induce almsgiving. The case was a pitiable one, both defendants being destitute and famished. The man, who had served in the South African War, said, for them it was either begging or stealing. Nothing was known against the couple who however, were sentenced by the magistrate to a month's hard labour each.' These poor wretches slink up to you in our English streets, glancing furtively round for a possible policeman, and holding out some

unwholesome-looking rubbish, deprecatingly whine out 'I'm not begging.' Which is the happier, one of these free enlightened English citizens, or a beggar of the old days in the Papal States, furnished with a Cardinal's license, sitting in the sun on the steps of some great basilica, stretching out his palm to the entering worshippers with the appeal, 'Per l'amore di Gesù—per l'amore di Maria Santissima?'

Another newspaper contains an account of an old man who has been deprived of his old-age pension, because when actually starving, he had taken a few plums from an orchard for which he 'did time.' The starving Christian is permitted, I believe, by St Alphonso to steal sufficient to sustain life. It is difficult to see why Protestantism does not admit this right, since it admits the right of manslaughter in self defence.

At a recent meeting of a Board of Guardians known to me, a humane and kind-hearted member, a working man, moved the following resolution: 'that in order to make the Christian poor as bright as possible, Sunday visitors should be allowed to the inmates of the Union,' a ribald newspaper suggested 'sandpaper.' The wording of the

motion may have been defective, but its spirit was beautiful. In the Middle Ages there were many ways of making the Christian poor as bright as possible. The world must have become duller, blanker, greyer, everywhere as the Reformation passed over it, as shrines, processions, pilgrimages were swept away, and the arts of the glass painter, the illuminator, the embroiderer were needed no more. The last little piece of the Middle Ages still left in Europe is perhaps Lower Brittany. At a Breton 'pardon' one may still see what a patronal feast was once like in every parish in Europe. In the morning the Christian poor are made bright by the procession, (I speak of nothing deeper), they go round and round with their candles behind a forest of crosses hung with silver bells, and in the afternoon they listen to the ballad singers, and play skittles, and nine pins, and holiday games. To see what the Reformation did for the brightness of the Christian poor, one has only to reflect that in England their one idea of a festival is a funeral.

It does not trouble me at all that the origin of many of these festivals appears to modern enlightenment superstitious in the

highest degree. There is, for instance, a dancing procession held every year, I believe, somewhere near Grenoble. It commemorates a procession that sometime in the sixteenth century started on its way singing litanies for the recovery of a certain invalid. It had not got far, before news was brought that not only the invalid, but every other sick person in the town had been healed, whereupon all the assistants spontaneously began to dance. This story gives one quite a number of pleasant things to think of. It is pleasant to think of so many sick people getting well, of so many others being glad of it, of so many people with so much vitality and gaiety of heart as to be able to dance spontaneously, and then it is pleasant to think of the bright procession moving its dancing way through the vines and chestnuts for three hundred years. As one thinks of it one's heart with pleasure fills, and dances with the procession.

In its most tyrannous times the Church at anyrate provided a safe shelter for innocent human joy. The case is admirably put by Mr Chesterton in his recent book *Orthodoxy*. He says that some children had been playing gaily and fearlessly for years upon some cliff

surrounded by firm and lofty walls. These walls were at last thrown down by some convulsion of nature, the children looked over the edge of the precipice, and at once the songs and games were hushed, they huddled together in the centre of the cliff, too terrified to speak. Nothing can be truer. I quote an illustration from a recent book. In some Scottish reminiscences lately published, the author speaks of a man recently dead, who was master of a violin, and describes how attached he was to its dulcet notes. The minister pointed to him from the pulpit and said, 'Thou art there behind the door, thou miserable man with the grey hair, playing thine old fiddle with the cold hand without, and the devil's fire within.' His family implored him to burn his violin, made by a pupil of Stradivarius. The instrument with the sweet tone was sold for five shillings. A minister in a neighbouring isle related how on religious grounds he had broken 'the only fiddle in the parish.' This spiritual terrorism, it must be remembered, domineered not only over opinions, but over the whole of human life. As a contrast to this poor old man, robbed of his fiddle by a dark and cruel fanaticism, think of Stradivarius at Cremona,

marking every violin he made with the holy name of Jesus, so that one of these glorious instruments is known to this day as a *Stradivarius del Gesu.* Think of Mozart, writing on the score of his Masses *In Nomine Domini, Amen.* If the Church gave no liberty to the populace to dispute endlessly on abstruse points about which all their disputations were obviously futile, she at least fostered all lovely human arts, all happy human things.

> For the good are always merry,
> Save by an evil chance ;
> And the merry love to fiddle,
> And the merry love to dance.

I can imagine no happier lot than to have lived as an artist or musician in some small South German state, in an entirely Catholic atmosphere, amid a people of neighbours untroubled by political ambition or religious doubt, and by the pursuit of some lovely art to have ministered to the happiness of men with the simple unhesitating belief that at the same time one worked for the glory of God. Provençal poets have made these happy acts of faith, and Tyrolese musicians. So Van Eyck and Menling were at unity with themselves, and Mozart and Palestrina.

There is leisure for art and music and pleasant things when the mind of the whole people is in a state of religious repose, and rests upon a system absolutely accepted. This religious contentment makes for happiness and sanity in the highest degree. So far as I am aware, the awful spiritual anguish of those who imagined themselves reprobate, their despair of salvation, their terrible struggles to conjure up a sensible feeling of acceptance so often in vain, were miseries inflicted on mankind by Puritanism alone, and were unknown before the Reformation. We read of Bunyan wishing that he had been born a beast. All this 'conviction of sin' had nothing whatever to do with Christian penitence, and contrition for actual sin; it was simply a conviction that one had been born into a spiritual state of the most desperate wretchedness. If any actual sins are ever mentioned in Puritan biographies at all, they are purely fictitious offences like bell-ringing, or playing at tip-cat on the village green. One has only to read the incredible books of Boston and Jonathan Edwards to see what was the horror of great darkness which Puritanism brought upon the world. The most ardent enthusiast for

Reformation light could hardly describe these books as 'glad tidings of great joy.' The imagination is appalled at the thought of a society which was really dominated by these beliefs.

This teaching must have tortured and destroyed countless unremembered victims, but the pathetic story of the poet Cowper is known to everyone. John Newton shattered his delicate and sympathetic mind, as though it had been a violin. What a happy life might have been his, if a kindly fortune had cast his lot in Provençe or Tuscany, or say in the Balearic Islands! How he would have delighted in the Palm Sunday procession with its palms and olives, the Christmas Crib with its animals, the yule log, the *rocco di ogni bene*, 'the trunk of all good,' as Tuscans call it, which must be a fruit tree, which is drawn in decked with coloured ribbons, and on which wheat and wine are poured with the words, 'I am the Bread of Life and the Everlasting Hope!' The last result of John Newton's 'gospel sermons' was that his victim died with the words, 'I feel unutterable despair.'

Again Catholicism taught submission, Puritanism set forth revolt as the highest

human virtue. The contrast between the original Christianity and the sixteenth century Protestantism is here most startling. The Martyrs of the first three centuries turned the other cheek; the Puritans invariably assassinated their persecutors. I grant that the deeds of men like Cardinal Beaton or Archbishop Sharpe were execrable:—the natural man cannot help feeling a certain satisfaction in their deaths, but it must be remembered that their murderers claimed to be the Christian Saints *par excellence*. If the disruption of Christendom which had been brought about by such as they could have been justified at all it could only be by a more wide-spread growth of the spirit of the Beatitudes, a more plentiful bringing forth of the fruits of Calvary, than anything the old Church had to show. Imagine a band of early Christians, armed to the teeth, avenging the deaths of St Fabian and St Sebastian by the slaughter of a Roman prefect!

The Puritan character at its best has never been a lovable one. As seen in its greatest lights and saints it is not the character of the Beatitudes. Neither have its heroes been conspicuously happy people

in the ordinary human sense. They are one and all quite devoid of that elusive but most real quality which we call 'charm.' Milton, for instance, was described during the late commemoration as a 'radiant optimist,' for my own part I cannot discover the slightest trace of joy in anything he ever wrote. His young wife fled from the dull house where the silence was only broken by the crying of flagellated school boys. A writer in the *Spectator* has recently pointed out that in his great poem there is no trace of any love for animals, or of any real observation of them. He never mentions them except in the most conventional way. He has none of the Gothic love for birds and beasts that blossomed out in the portals of great cathedrals. 'It is so awfully horrid at the "Higher Thought,"' said a little girl often taken by her elders to that centre of light, 'there's not a dog or a cat or anything that is nice'; and so we may say of *Paradise Lost*. In his will he goes out of his way to speak of the 'undutifulness' of his daughters. Such things are excusable no doubt to troubled mortals, but Milton is put before us as the shining example of the perfected Christianity. For my own part I confess the whole impression that he makes

is unsympathetic. I do not think that anyone will assert that he was such a happy man as Sir Thomas More. Nor can one ever think of Cromwell as a happy man. Thomas Carlyle is the Puritan brought up to date. His saying that there is something better than happiness, namely blessedness, is an admirable example of the discord in which Puritanism delights. There is of course no distinction between the two things. Blessedness is the supreme degree of happiness. This is undoubtedly the promise of the Beatitudes. Blessed Francis of Assisi for instance had not a chimerical something 'better than happiness,' but the quintessence of happiness itself, 'perfect gladness,' as he says. As illustrating the effect produced by the two systems it is instructive to compare two recent books, the Autobiography of Mr Gosse in *Father and Son*, and that of the Provençal poet *Federi Mistral*.

As an example of the Catholic character at its best, and the happiness which the Catholic religion can produce, even in the midst of terrible sufferings, I will refer to Silvio Pelico and his book *Mie Prigioni*. 'I prayed to God,' he says, 'to God made Man, and experienced in all human sorrow.'

This is the true note of the religion of the Incarnation, the faith of all Christian lands and ages, the faith of the future as of the past. In a lovely poem he describes the great vision which flooded with its light his prison cell. He sees the Lord who reigns in heaven in radiant glory, and whose delight is to be with man—'il picciol nomo in questa valle errante.' He sees the bright face moving towards him across profound abysses —'io lo vidi, per baratri profondi movermi incontro'—and come nearer and nearer until He clasps him to His Heart. He calls the Saviour 'il mio Diletto.'

From this has come so many beautiful things; the spectacle which absorbs and fascinates the mind of the vast cathedrals built for Him who had not where to lay His head, and for the Mother who bore him in the stable, the unceasing praises which ascend daily and hourly to the Carpenter of Nazareth from every corner of the earth. I have often thought that were I a multi-millionaire, troubled by the disposal of my wealth, I would leave at least a million, say, to the cathedral of Seville, to the fund 'for the ornaments of the Church.'

LITTLE LIVING CREATURES

THE Ancient Mariner cried out as he told of the water-snakes :—

> O happy living things! no tongue
> Their beauty might declare.

'Happy living things' always seems to be the exact phrase to describe the little creatures, 'les bestioles,' as the French call them, the little animated particles of light and colour, of sound and motion in which the joy of living is so perfectly expressed. A bluebottle is, no doubt, a 'bestiole,' or a mosquito. A thousand and one other undesirable things may lay claim to the name, but the kindly diminutive seems better kept for such creatures as the lizard, the cicada, the firefly, the glow-worm, the

butterfly, the dragon-fly, and the lady-bird.

These all seem to belong to a pagan, pantheist Nature, a world self-sufficient, self-existent, eternal, to be the momentary flashing into consciousness of its unconscious delight in itself. They are the joyous, untiring worshippers of the sun, the true and only Divinity of Paganism in all its forms, and of all Pagan men and things.

> For summer is the sovereign good
> Of all the creatures of the wood.

'Le bon Dieu—c'est le soleil,' exclaims a fat Frenchman in the train. Who does not know in travelling south the delight of hearing the first cicada, the note of a world becoming more living and sufficing, a world that as one moves southward seems always more *natura* rather than *creatura*, φύσις rather than κτίσις? In the true south the whole plain is filled with their voices, it becomes alive with their song, one multitudinous strident hymn to Pan and to Apollo. The league-long leaps of one of these astonishing creatures are each a *salto mortale*, a leap 'out of France into Spain,' of folk-tales and nursery rhymes. In them

all the vitality and activity of Nature, the soul of the summer and the south, is made audible and visible.

The lizard is another pagan. It is again a sign of the South to see this happy little being flicker over the hot stones for the first time. Dante with his keen eyes must have often watched him, and so amid the countless images of the Divine Comedy, he makes mention of—

> il ramorro, sotto la gran fersa
> Ne' di canicular cangiando siepe
> Folgore par, se la vie attraversa.
> (*Inf.* xxv. 79-81.)

'He seems a flash of lightning' in his fiery swiftness. In temples like Paestum and Segeste, by waveless seas and under violet skies, amid dark groves of cypresses, in nooks and crannies of the marble porticoes and courts, the lizard must long ago have found him a house. It is good to think on a November London day of his swift flicker over the broad white temple steps. The king of the little living creatures is, no doubt, the dragonfly. He is a creature of the air, not like the cicada or the lizard, of the earth. His flight expresses the very ecstasy of

motion—he darts as a swallow darts. It has again and again fallen to my lot to be taken captive, like the Ancient Mariner, by the beauty of these 'happy living things.' In the wonderful year 1893 from February to October, day succeeded day of pure, white sunshine. All through that gorgeous summer I took a five-mile walk, two or three times a week, in a remote North-country district. For about three miles the road skirted a park wall. One day in mid July I found this wall alive with dragonflies. It was a revel of motion and of colour, 'blue, glossy green, and velvet black,' three miles long.

Again, I remember as a very little child, standing one bright autumn morning amid tall asparagus ferns, which were dotted all over with scarlet ladybirds. 'Ladybird' is, of course, 'our Lady's bird.' It is a touching evidence of the faith of the Middle Ages that the simple people found even for these creatures Christian names. In Germany the ladybird is the 'Maricukäfer,' the 'Mary-fly.' In France it is the 'bête du bon Dieu,' the 'bestiole,' the 'little living creature' of 'the good Jesus,' the kind God.

About the glow-worm there is a quaint

charm. The most poetic light, more than moonlight, starlight, firelight, candlelight, is surely the light of glow-worms. It seems to belong to the far North, to the 'high latitudes' of Jean Paul's country parson. One thinks of the tiny lamps of the glow-worms lighted up the livelong summer night in Swedish pine woods, and by the roadside, and in faëry meadows of far Northern lands. I remember one hot July evening, when the air was heavy with a coming storm, strolling out of my country cottage, and finding the long grass of the roadside, still uncut, lit up here and there by the strange, soft shining of clusters and constellations of these elfin lamps. In Germany the glow-worm is called 'Johanniswürmchen,' 'St John's little worm,' and in spite of its Christian seeming the name suggests that the grass was lit up with glow-worms as with candles, when the great fires of the old sun-worship were kindled all over Europe on Midsummer night.

The butterfly is called 'God's flame' by the spiritually-minded people who speak Celtic tongues. To our duller minds this flying flower may seem only to express a sensuous delight in the moment the joy

of life in the sunshine. The dispute between Christianity and Paganism is at the bottom of many questions, and it remains the great intellectual interest of the world. There is a quaint mediæval poem called 'The dispute Between the Lady Venus and the Virgin Mary.' The 'little living creatures' might seem to belong wholly to the pagan world of the ancient gods, but by innumerable voices of popular language and tradition Christianity has laid claim even to these. Once more, I remember as a child going into the garden one sunny Michaelmas Day and seeing a great clump of Michaelmas daisies covered with a swarm of fluttering red admiral butterflies, 'in a wonderful order'—'*miro ordine*,' as the Collect says. To this day I never think of Michaelmas without a mental picture of a flowering mass of purple autumn daisies, and above their golden hearts a flutter of 'wings full of eyes' like those of the seraphim. As that fair sight is blended with all the associations of the day, I find a hint of a possible reconciliation of the two great sides of the human mind.

CHRISTIAN AND ROMANTIC

THE spiritual history of numberless lives must have been filled by the struggle between the artistic temperament and the Christian religion. In Protestant communities, especially in England and the United States, this struggle is a frequent motive of works of fiction. The story is generally one of revolt. Puritanism found no place for the artist, and he was led forth with the evildoers, or himself fled from a fold, the bareness and narrowness of which to him was intolerable. If the spiritual instinct was stronger than the artistic he remained, starving and repressing one whole side of his nature. Where Christianity was identified with Puritanism, the poets, the

artists, the dramatists, the novelists formed a permanent opposition.

The Tractarian Movement, which, it has often been pointed out, was the Romantic Movement on its religious side, no doubt afforded to many a solution of this problem. It was a fortunate moment in which to be born for those who possessed at once the artistic and the devotional temperaments. The dramatic and poetic instincts were no longer banned, but a religious use was found for them, and it became possible for these two sides of life to be fused in a religion of the most romantic passion and tenderness.

This was never more strikingly exemplified than in the subject of this paper, John Mason Neale. Probably there was no one ever born in whom the two strains, the romantic and the Christian, were alike so strong. Had he lived a little earlier, when the saints still slept beneath their whitewash on church walls and no one had dreamed of disturbing them, he would not indeed have been in revolt, for under any system, Christianity would have been the very core and inmost secret of his life, but his spiritual history would have been one of discomfort. As it was, the Oxford Movement gave him exactly

what he wanted, provided the atmosphere in which his whole nature could flourish, and blossom, and give forth the best which was in it to give. His life indeed was by no means without struggles, but they were external ones, they came from the opposition of 'wicked men' as he was wont to call those who opposed him. He knew nothing of any internal conflict.

It is probable that the name of Dr Neale conveys very little to great numbers even of the educated among our countrymen. It is unknown, or barely known, to many to whom the names of Newman, Pusey, and Keble are familiar. They sing 'Art thou weary, art thou languid?' again and again in church, and do not know that it is his. They hear 'Good King Wenceslas' year after year at Christmas, and have no idea to whom they owe it. They know that 'Brief life is here our portion' and 'Jerusalem the Golden' are translations of mediæval hymns, but do not know that he was the translator. These are but examples of an unceasing stream of stories, hymns, ballads, sermons, that poured from his pen from 1841 to 1866. All this mass of work was the expression of a typical, normal, universal Christian orthodoxy in a

form filled with all the qualities of romantic literature.

John Mason Neale was born in 1818, a child of the strictest Evangelical tradition. Three of his ancestors on his mother's side had been Nonconformist ministers. One of them preached in London during the Great Plague, and was imprisoned under the Conventicle Act. His father who died in 1822, when his little son was five years old, had been before his ordination a devourer of novels and a constant haunter of theatres. No doubt the 'romantic' strain in Neale came from him. However, his 'conversion' had been marked by his violently *flinging* the Waverley novel he had been reading from one end of the room to the other. The boy was brought up by his mother, a Puritan of the most rigid and unbending kind. The following story exemplifies the kind of teaching he received. He was subjected to interminable Bible readings, to which by the way he probably owed the really amazing knowledge of Scripture which he possessed. Those familiar with his writings know how he thinks in the words of the Bible, not quoting texts, but using the words as the natural expression of his own thought. One

winter evening the reading had been something about 'the Lamb.' The boy, at that time eight years old, usually tongue-tied on these occasions, had ventured to murmur that 'it was beautiful to think of Our Lord as a Lamb.' 'He is not a lamb to the unconverted' was the reply; 'if you were to die to-night—and who knows but that you may?—you would find Him a lion.' The child went to bed, put his head under the bedclothes, and sobbed bitterly. It is difficult to form an adequate idea of the torture and oppression caused by this teaching to a sensitive child, and its withering and blighting effect on every devotional instinct. In the old Evangelical biographies we read of children of five, even of three, being solemnly taken aside, and warned that unless they got 'a new heart' if they died that night they would be lost. It is interesting to compare the prayers Neale wrote afterwards for his own little girl. She is made to ask to remember always that she is God's child; she prays for the rich and the poor, the living and the dead, because they all belong to the Heavenly Father. She remembers that she has the Holy Angels to keep her from anything that would hurt or

frighten her; and asks for help in this life and everlasting joy in that to come. Between the twenties and the fifties of the last century the spiritual climate had been altered by the gulf stream of the sacramental doctrine. It is curious to reflect that the chief charge now brought by the descendants of the Puritans against the Church is that she holds the doctrine of Original Sin. This, of course, is true, but it is also true that for all practical purposes this doctrine does not exist in the Catholic system. The initial obstacle, the huge insurmountable barrier, the thought of which darkened the lives of so many children brought up, like the little Neale, in Evangelical households, is taken away in Baptism. The relation between the child and God is already established without any act or effort of the child's own, and if broken can be at once restored.

Dr Neale's outward life need not long detain us. He graduated at Cambridge, where he was one of the founders of the Camden Society—a Society for the study of Church Architecture, which played no small part in the ecclesiastical changes of the past fifty years. He seems to have accepted 'Catholic' beliefs and practices,

without any hesitation or difficulty, as a son of the house coming into his rightful heritage. He married, was ordained, attempted parish work as Vicar of Crawley, in Sussex, was compelled through illness to relinquish it, and after some time spent in Madeira, accepted the post of Warden of Sackville College, East Grinstead, an almshouse, where amid continual opposition he ministered to a few poor people till his death in 1866. It is not my purpose here to tell the story of the Sisterhood which he founded, or to dwell upon any of the external facts of his life. My own interest is in the man himself, and in his books.

It is significant that he was the master of more than twenty languages. His translations are from Greek, Syriac, Armenian, Russian. His sermons are filled with the proverbs of all tongues. Preaching on Whit-Sunday he will say that in the East 'to go on *foot*' is 'to go on the Apostle's horse.' Any one less Anglican, less insular, it is impossible to imagine. He is a Christian of the Universal Church. In his Holy Week sermons one is aware of a lamentation great like the sea breaking in hoarse waves of Tenebrae over all the

world. This must have been an altogether new note in the forties and fifties of the last century. To the ordinary Protestant of that date, Greece, Syria, Russia, were half-fabulous lands inhabited by idolaters. The Bible was the exclusive possession of Great Britain, and the source of its superiority. So over the centuries from the Apostles to the Reformation stretched a pall of darkness under which all the beasts of the forest moved. The Tractarians claimed kinship with the Church of other lands and ages, but much of their literature produces a stifling effect. Keble, for instance, never seems to have gone further from Hursley than Winchester. How unmitigatedly English are the novels of Miss Yonge! But Neale's Christianity is nothing if not cosmopolitan. He set the English Protestants all singing 'Veni, Sancte Spiritus,' and 'Jesu, dulcis memoria,' he translated Oriental Liturgies, and wrote histories of the Eastern Church, and collected the sermons of mediæval preachers, and more than any single man, destroyed, so far as it is destroyed, the assumption that Christianity is a discovery of three hundred years ago, or a peculiar appendage of the English-speaking race.

The solid phalanx of British church-going respectability became merged in the great multitude that no man can number of every tribe and people and language and nation and tongue.

Neale, and others like him, found church-going in England dreary beyond words. The dreariness of the sermons, for instance, of the ordinary preacher either of the High and Dry, or of the Evangelical school must have been something perfectly indescribable, though those of the latter were no doubt more gloomy and terrifying. 'No long time ago,' Neale himself writes in his volume on *Mediæal Preachers*, 'in examining a village in one of the Midland counties, my attention was attracted by a paper in the Rector's pew, which somewhat resembled a placard. On investigation I found it to be a sermon entitled "On the Vanity and Uncertainty of Human Life." If at any time the worthy incumbent should chance to leave behind the sermon he intended to deliver, here was a safe reserve. Human life would always be uncertain; moralists would always call it vain; the sermon therefore would never come *mal-à-propos*.' 'If you will listen to me,' said a clergyman of the old school to

Neale on another occasion, 'I will show you this afternoon how a village congregation ought to be addressed.' He began word for word in this way: 'To those who will consider the harmony which reigns in the various accounts of Christ's Passion, confirmed as those accounts are by the antecedent testimonies of the Prophets on the one hand, and by the concurrent testimonies of the Epistles on the other, it will appear in the highest degree probable that Our Blessed Lord was not an impostor, but was in reality what He gave Himself out to be, the Son of God.' We all in our time have believed in this kind of deliverances. With what a shock of delight and surprise must those who had been wearied out with them have heard the preaching of Dr Neale. A sermon of his, indeed, is like a ballad. Compare, for instance, one of his Advent sermons with the old-fashioned discourses on Revelations and the Book of Daniel. It is as though amid the wearisome computations of 'a time, times, and a half,' a clear young voice began to sing

A Pâques reviendra,
Ou à la Trinité.

I have often imagined the feelings of a dreamy, novel-reading boy, going to a country church on a winter afternoon some fifty years ago, sitting in a high pew and settling himself to listen to the sermon with decorous resignation, and then as a stranger mounted the pulpit, finding the fountain of refreshment opened to him as he was shown the very romance of religion. He would, I think, have been a little puzzled, having heard much of the Duke of Alva, and the Spanish Inquisition, to hear some saintly story introduced with the words, 'In Holland where God's servants were persecuted by heretics.' (To be exact, this delightful touch occurs in one of his children's stories, not in a sermon.) It would have been novel and joyful to have heard the names of common things, the different parts of a ship's rigging, flags, and signals like the 'Blue Peter' spoken of from the pulpit. This, of course, is romanticism, the reaction from the classical writers who used no single word that was not colourless. It is also a Catholic note—the touch of the Church on common things. The power of divining a Christian significance in national sight and objects has belonged to Catholicism from the first. Father

Tyrrell, for instance, after all still so essentially Catholic, speaks in his latest book of the Mystical Body of Christ as formed of those 'who cluster round Him, like swarming bees around their queen,' Conventional Protestantism to the very tones of its voice was neither natural nor supernatural, but simply unnatural. I think our boy would have wanted to go to church again and would have hoped that the strange preacher would be there next Sunday.

The significance of wells and vineyards, the sacred character of wheat and wine and oil, the mystic meanings hidden beneath the lightest words of Scripture, all these forgotten Christian things were found again by Neale. The mystical interpretation of Scripture in which he revelled must have struck a new note in his day. As he read the Old Testament, 'the clouds of its chronicled stories' 'thundered and lightened and rained' with their true meaning. To give one instance, not from the Old Testament but from the New. The patristic interpretation of the Parable of the Good Samaritan is probably quite familiar to most churchgoers at the present time, but it cannot have been so fifty years ago. It is first found in Origen, and

is at least seventeen centuries old. The traveller going down to Jericho, and falling among thieves is Adam's race, fallen and wounded by sin, half dead on the downward road, the Priest and the Levite passing by are the Law and the Prophets unable to render any help, the Samaritan on his journey, going up to Jerusalem is Our Lord, the beast on which He sets the wounded man is His Humanity, the wine and oil His Blood and the Holy Spirit, the inn the Church, the two pence the two great Sacraments and the inn-keeper the Bishop. The last is a very genial touch. One sees the portly Boniface in cope and mitre, holding his pastoral staff as he stands to receive the wounded traveller in the doorway of a roomy, hospitable inn, with its Sign hanging in a great Tree before it. (Neale, by the way, always found time to notice inn-signs. In one of his stories he speaks affectionately of the sign of 'La Reine Pédanque,' 'Good Queen Goose-foot'—so common in old France, before its place was taken by 'Hôtel de la Gare' and the like.) All his sermons are full of the scenery of the road, its robbers and wayside inns. The technical name, of course, given to this life by the

mediæval saints was 'the Way,' leading to 'the Country.'

There is a strange charm in the use he makes of the weather, and the way in which he suffuses the seasons of the year with Christian feeling. For instance, he begins an Advent sermon—

'To another Advent God has spared us; and so in the midst of the shortening days and cloudy skies and miserable fogs of November, we have to look forward to His coming Whose Kingdom is a Kingdom of life and light and everlasting spring.'

Or on some Sunday of a cold dull Easter he will say—

'This dark gloomy weather—this cold nipping wind—they are hardly fitted, so it seems to me, for our Easter joy. We want bright warm days, we want to see the leaves unfolding almost every hour, we want to hear the birds.'

Or in a Christmas carol he uses a bit of Sussex weather lore like this—

Tho' the cold grows stronger,
Tho' the world loves night,
Yet the days are longer,
Christ is born our Light.

'As the days lengthen, the cold strengthens' —how often he must have heard the saw in

the lengthening January days from the old folks at East Grinstead! He had the poet's power of bending all things to his thought. The old people in the almshouse were the spectators among whom he stood as he assisted at the Divine Drama which for him was being enacted eternally, and their sayings and doings in the pauses of the story are caught up into the Divine Action, and became part of it.

I think the *Sackville College Sermons* is the most beautiful book in the English language. Personally, I can read it, when I can read nothing else. I find myself repeating bits of it, amid great crowds, and on long lonely journeys, and in foreign places, and in sleepless nights. It has the charm of golden October sunshine, of lengthening April twilight. The style is simplicity and lucidity itself. The words are absolutely one with the thought, which is the very heart of the preacher's faith and hope and love. You could no more change a word of it than you could change a word of *Christabel.* It is, I think, the most Christian book that was ever written, as there was never surely a more Christian mind than Neale's. It is the book one would give to any one inquir-

ing what the Christian doctrine is. One wonders what the old folk at East Grinstead thought of these sermons.

Let me give an extract or two, illustrating the romantic and the Christian quality of his mind. The following is from a sermon on Easter Day—

'What, if we could really take to ourselves wings and fly thither—what should we see? We should see a magnificent Church, in its shape quite round, in the very middle a little building covered with a rich roof. Within that is the rock where the Lord lay; the very same rock in which the Sepulchre was hewn—the very same rock by which the Angels sat. At this moment multitudes from all nations have gone up to keep their Easter in Jerusalem, multitudes have gone up, first to weep and to pray by that most holy Tomb, and then to receive their Easter Communion from the Altar, built on that place where our Lord appeared to Mary Magdalene. They are truly happy, they have a privilege greater than we can well imagine. We have never seen, we never shall see, all those most holy and most dear places, the ground where the Cross was set up, the rock on which Our Lord's Body was laid out to be anointed, the

Sepulchre, the place where Our Risen Redeemer appeared to Mary. But shall I tell you what, except it be by our own fault, we shall see one day? Not the place of the Cross, but the Man that hung thereon—we shall see Him eye to eye and face to face, we shall see the print of the nails graven in His Hand, the mark of the Spear imprinted in His Side.' This from another Easter sermon illustrates the world-wide character of Neale's Christianity—

'"The Lord is risen indeed." They are words passing over the world now. In many countries they form men's common greeting to each other at Easter time. Millions of lips are repeating them, millions of hearts are dwelling upon them, millions of Christians are welcoming in the Festival of all festivals. In different parts of the Church it is called Great Sunday, Bright Sunday, Holy Sunday, Divine Sunday. The sun of that first Easter had not come up over the earth before the Holy Women heard the words of the Angel: "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, for He is risen, as He said."' He says at Christmas—

'There is nothing really sad in the thought that for several of you there cannot be many more Christmasses; for some one or two, perhaps, not one more. There is a happier

meeting, as you know very well, than even that of friends at Christmas; there is a land where He Whom we worship on this most holy night as the Infant of Bethlehem is seated on the Right Hand of the Father, the Light and the Glory of His People. There it is that He is, indeed, all their salvation. As the child's hymn says and child's hymn tho' it be, I hope to die with the faith of it in my heart, 'There our eyes at last shall see Him."'

I can do no more than mention the *Commentary on the Psalms.* It is described on the title-page as 'taken from Primitive and Mediæval Writers, and from the Office Books and Hymns of the Roman, Mosarabic, Ambrosian, Gallican, Greek, Coptic, and Syriac Rites.' It is in four volumes, only the first of which is Neale's. After his death the work was continued and completed by his friend Dr Littledale, but his commentary is altogether inferior. The first volume is perhaps, even lovelier than the *Sackville College Sermons.*

It would be doing Dr Neale a great injustice to look upon him as a religious *dilettante,* or even as a partisan Catholic. He was a great scholar, a great theologian, a great Christian. This is a greater and an older name than even the glorious name of

Catholic. The one theme of his teaching is the heart of the Christian Faith. It is the preaching not of a system, but of a Person. This, perhaps, was not the case with the early Tractarians, especially Newman, for whose writings Neale did not greatly care. It was said, and truly, of Dean Church, that his sermons were *Christian* sermons. They indeed teach the same central and authentic doctrine, but how unlike are these studied and pedestrian compositions to Dr Neale's strains of unpremeditated art. Among the successors of the Tractarians the idea of devotion to a person constantly gains on that of submission to a system. In such teaching lies the hope of the Re-union of Christendom. It is to such teaching that men turn, when, weary of negotiations and platitudes, they leave a religion of controversy for a religion of devotion.

He saw unerringly all the implications of Christianity. 'The North is the Christian side,' he said at the time of the American Civil War. Modern 'Imperialism' would have been hateful to him. He was no doubt a Jacobite, and full of 'impossible loyalties,' but his mind was filled with that essential 'liberalism' (the only kind that matters or counts) which is implied in all Christianity and all romance.

His life in the seclusion of East Grinstead, surrounded by precious icons and rare books, must have been a very happy one, in spite of Protestant abuse, and riots at the funerals of the sisters, and the inhibitions of a bishop anxious to preserve the souls of the old people from 'Mr Neale's spiritual haberdashery.' Of doubts he appears to have had absolutely none. The higher criticism did not exist for him. 'The Jews wrote it, the Protestants read it, the Catholics understand it,' he was in the habit of quoting as 'a common proverb' about the Bible. I have never met this common proverb anywhere else, and strongly suspect it of being a pious invention. Miracles were no manner of stumbling-block to him. In one of his tours in the South of France he came across a servant girl who had known the Curé d'Ars. 'I asked her if she knew anything about the multiplication of the meal,' he says. '"Mais, mon Dieu, j'y étais moi-même; j'avais les mains dans la pâte; c'est moi qu'on envoya au Saint Curé pour lui demander ce que nous devions faire. . . ." She said how they felt the dough grow and grow under their hands as they kneaded it. I asked her how they felt. "Tout le monde criait au miracle! Mais nous, nous n'étions

pas étonnées, pas le moins du monde, nous savions quel pouvoir le bon Curé avait auprès du bon Dieu, et quand il m'avait dit 'Allez, allez, ma bonne petite, travaillez la pâte, il y en aura assez,' nous n'en doutions plus." There, I think it was worth while going a hundred miles to hear that story from an eye-witness. I confess I had not thoroughly believed it before.' He travelled much in all sorts of countries, and, indeed, was better known and valued abroad than in England. It must have been a pleasure to him to have received a hundred pounds from the Czar of Russia, in recognition of his book on the Eastern Church. 'You do not know what a great man I am in Russia,' he himself says.

He died after a few days' illness, at the early age of forty-seven, on August 6, 1866. 'I must needs keep this Feast that cometh at Jerusalem,' ran the text above the Crucifix and candles at his coffin's head. His tombstone in East Grinstead Churchyard, in the Church of which for many years he was not allowed to preach, has the inscription 'Jesu, Fili Dei, miserere mei,' and pilgrims from many lands to whom the very name of the inhibiting bishop is unknown, come and kneel down by that graveside.

ON PAN-CAKES AND PAN-PIPES.

ONE of those kind people who take the trouble to let a writer know when anything he has to say interests them said recently in a letter to me (*a propos* of something I had published), 'the Bretons and Spaniards enjoy their festivals as a schoolboy eats a pan-cake, without even a remote thought of Pan.' I confess that I was both startled and delighted by the suggestion of a connection, hitherto by me unsuspected, between Pan and pan-cakes. To me a Shrovetide pancake had been a pancake flat and round, and it had been nothing more. It had smelt of the frying-pan rather than of the fair humanities of old religion. Skeat derives pan-cake from 'pan,' not the god, but the broad shallow vessel, the Latin 'patina,' the

Low Latin 'panna.' But what is the truth about this? The idea seems too good not to be true. The tossing of the pancake performed in some places has all the air of some old-world sacred rite. What more fitting than that the sacred cake should be solemnly eaten in honour of Pan on the day of 'Carne Vale,' of farewell to the *joie de vivre*, at the close of festivities and merry-makings before the wintry weeks of Lent?

Pan falls asleep every winter, but we do not say 'farewell' to him till the Christmas merriment is over, and even then (unlike the schoolboy mentioned above) we look forward to his vernal woodland waking, and so our Shrove Tuesday pancake becomes the pancake of a prophecy. There comes every year some one day when Pan, the deathless, wakes from sleep, when the dead earth is alive again, and once more becomes life-giving and satisfying. In days now vanished and consumed by Time, I lived in a dilapidated cottage, behind which stretched miles and miles of deep green woods. There is nothing in the world like a spring wood in South-country England. As one writes one smells the good smell of wood where the wood-cutters are at work in a clearing in

the dry, warm air. These woods were to all intents and purposes my own careless park and pleasaunce. Year after year I spent hours in them, day after day, all the long summer through. It was not quite 'farewell my book and my devotion,' but they were somewhat lazy pretexts for sauntering in that warm and still and solitary place. They were woods in which one might lose oneself—in which one never met another human creature, save now and again a game-keeper, or the wood-cutters at their work. Day after day each spring, one would ask the question, 'Shall I try the woods to-day?' Sometimes one made the attempt too soon, only to be driven back by the chill, unkindly weather. But there always came some one day, when the winter spell was broken, and one felt again the old delight, the joy of the earth's waking. This was usually about the twenty-first of April. The last ten days in April and the first ten in May are the time of the fresh beauty of an English wood.

Long before that, of course, the primrose 'ventures up,' as Mr Stephen Phillips says, and he is a poet, if but for that one word. It comes up, bud and stem and leaves

all together, out of the earth, like the flower from an enchanter's pot, but it looks starved and stunted in the winds of March. By mid-April the stars are large and yellow on their long juicy stalks. One has no skill to tell us of all the flowers, and cannot say which one loves best. The frail anemones in their shy clusters are the first venturers of all. How pure and gay they look when the one day comes! The orchises, with the strange mystical marks on their green leaves, bloom later on, in May, in their fresh beauty for a day or two, when the primroses are almost done. The different flowers had their haunts in different nooks and corners of the wood. One came now on primroses and anemones growing together, and now on violets. Here and there were banks of cowslips, and at the wood's farthest border a great sheet of bluebells. The flowers grew always best where there had been made a clearing in the wood the year before. One knows not what to speak of in the wood, or where to begin to praise. One thinks of the green woodland 'rides,' in spring, literally 'primrose paths' which crossed one another in all directions. One remembers the bronze gold of the young

oak-leaves, and the red and gilded oak-apples. One thinks, after all, of the silence, which made one long that tired town people must be bathed in it.

This silence was, for the most part, broken only by the noises of living creatures, by the notes of birds, and the whirr and rustle and hum of insects and furred and feathered and bristly things. These all knew the day of Pan's waking, and came to welcome him to his domain. Melissa knew when she would find the flowers. The sulphur-coloured butterflies, flower themselves, fluttered out the self-same day. As for the birds, the trees were green towers of Babel. The wood was haunted by nightingales, and the cuckoo mocked all day. The summer nights were filled with the scream of the night-jar. (It was pathetic, by the way, to hear a tired-looking woman, passing through the country of the wood in the train, say, one day in spring, 'I should so like to hear the cuckoo —I haven't heard him once this year.') The long months of Pan's reign were happy ones for all the creatures of his woodland retinue. One saw, indeed, sad sights sometimes, say, a bright-winged jay, caught by the leg in a trap, fluttering and screaming. I came

suddenly one day on a tree from the lowest branch of which hung the sleek, glossy bodies of seven freshly killed moles—*Septem Fratrum Martyrum.*

Lent tells us that we are greater than and different from all the sensuous world of which we form part, and should rise above it. In summer it may re-absorb us, but in Lent hundreds and thousands honestly try to gain a certain amount of detachment from it. On the day of pancakes they bid it, for a time, farewell. What form should this farewell take? What is the best way to keep the carnival?

If I could choose my own way of spending Shrove Tuesday evening, the entertainment of my choice would be a beautiful and elaborate rendering of Haydn's 'Toy Symphony.' The performers would appear in their appropriate costumes. The drummer would be the 'Joli Tambour' returning from the war, from whom the King's daughter, looking from her window, asked a rose. By the gallant boy would be a trumpeter, a little girl in white and gold, holding her trumpet to red lips in a grave, sweet, dead-white face, with long, straight, gold hair. The woodpecker would be in feathers, like

the actors in 'Chanticlere.' The cuckoo would be, not a bird, but a voice, haunting the Symphony as he will haunt the wood when spring comes in, and a plot of beechen green would hide the nightingale. From a ripening wheat-field would come the strident cry of the corncrake, calling up the very heat and stillness and fragrance of the summer night. The rattle would be twirled by a green-clad dancing wood-nymph, in the very ecstasy of spring. And, amid the performers of the Symphony, Pan himself would appear and disappear, giving forth from his pipes a music of piercing sweetness, the alluring, bewitching music of the sun-burnt earth.

CHRISTMAS BEER IN WORKHOUSES

EVERY year in the first or second week in November, just about the time that the Mayor's banquet is being held and the genial season of public dinners is beginning in provincial towns all over the country, the Boards of Guardians in their various districts, discuss the question whether the inmates of the workhouses under their care should or should not be granted the annual allowance of a pint of beer with their dinner on Christmas Day. That feast of good-will is the one occasion (apart from sickness) when alcoholic liquor in its mildest form comes within workhouse walls, and then it is limited to one pint. The attack on this poor pint of beer is renewed annually with the greatest persistency and zeal. As soon as the work-

house master makes his annual request to the Guardians for the usual Christmas, some teetotal member of the Board is ready with a petition signed by various good people of the town that the old folks may be deprived of their Christmas beer.

A great amount of literature on the subject is distributed on these occasions, a sample of which lies before me as I write. It is entitled *Christmas Beer at Workhouses*, (sic), and is said to be 'the results of Three General Enquiries into the Practice obtaining at the Workhouses of the United Kingdom, in relation to the Provision of Intoxicants at Christmastide.' It is by a Mr W. C. Amery of Birmingham, author, etc., who appears to devote his life to the genial purpose of doing away with workhouse beer. It is accompanied by a map in which the counties around London are very black, Yorkshire pale, and parts of Wales and Cornwall white. It is noticeable that though Mr Amery calls his pamphlet the result of a general inquiry he gives no answers to his question from the black part of the country. Scotch and Irish workhouses appear to be practically all 'non-alcoholic.'

When we come to the evil effects of the

pint of Christmas beer we find there is practically no evidence of any at all. The witnesses on this head are governors of workhouses which have never had the beer, and their statements are purely gratuitous assertions. A woman appears to have once got in Forfar workhouse, but this is the one solitary fact that is alleged. The testimonies as to its bad effect are of this kind, 'Mr Nicholson, Paisley, would not consider the result would be satisfactory if intoxicants of any description were given to inmates.' Mr J. Rogers of Omagh says, 'I am of opinion it would be the means of creating disorder.' Mr George Jackson of Linlithgow writes, 'Drink and insubordination seem inseparable.' Another says, 'If given beer, comfort and discipline would disappear.' The answer to these statements is that the workhouse master who is unable to provide against any disorder that may arise from such old people as wish for it having a pint of beer with their dinner on Christmas Day is not worth his salt. But as a matter of fact there is no serious pretence that any such disorder ever arises. If it does under the present circumstances the workhouse must be very badly managed indeed.

One quite fanciful objection is raised year by year. It is said that some inmates may exchange some other part of the dinner for a non-drinker's beer, and so get a double share. This might sometimes happen if a pint of beer were planked down indiscriminately by every plate, but as a matter of fact each inmate is asked beforehand whether he or she will take or prefer some substitute for it. In this case the exchange is no more likely to happen than that a port-loving Guardian at a dinner party should say to the lady he has taken in, 'If you'll give me that glass of port I'll give you this orange.' The lady would have no port unless she meant to drink it herself. Our author raises another point, which he says is 'too seldom considered by Guardians,' 'the annoyance caused to the quiet and sober poor by the noise of their tippling companions.' 'The inmates much prefer it than to have the day made miserable through half drunken people,' (sic). Two glasses of beer, 'half drunken people,' 'tippling companions!' One sees the scene; the churlish suspicion and reserve that so often reigns among the English poor breaking down and melting away; tongues are loosened; heads begin to wag, *old*

memories revive, old tales are told. If there are any 'quiet poor' made miserable by this, for my own part, I am glad that once a year they should be shaken out of their cantankerous lethargy. Equally fabulous is the statement that the beer interferes with the 'comfort of the officials.' The officials are kindly Christian people who like to see the old folks under their charge have a good time at Christmas. In the workhouse that I know best, there are 240 inmates of which forty take mineral waters, and 200 drink and enjoy their beer.

Our author brings forward the argument of the cost to the ratepayers, 'many of them themselves on the verge of pauperism.' I may remark in passing that the expenditure on beer for the 200 inmates of the workhouse I have mentioned is £2 10s. When one thinks of the sums the Guardians are in the habit of voting for all sorts of objects, without turning a hair, the argument seems a little weak. As if conscious of this our author at once goes on: 'The disuse of beer is not however a question of saving money merely, but rather one of comfort and true enjoyment for the officers and inmates of the workhouses, how best to spend a happy day.' (The style

of this pamphlet is not a very good object lesson in thinking.)

The whole argument consists in the assertion that the old people in reality like drink that chills better than drink that warms, or would do so, if they knew what was for their true good. Beer may give them 'enjoyment,' but mineral waters would give them 'true enjoyment.' For these characteristically Puritan assertions no particle of proof is offered. As an illustration of what the old people themselves think about it, I will mention the fact that in the workhouse of which I have spoken when the question was discussed by the Guardians last year, the workhouse master spoke strongly in favour of the beer saying (what every reasonable being knows to be true) that it added greatly to the old people's comfort and enjoyment, and was the cause of no trouble or disturbance at all. The old ladies in the infirmary sent for him afterwards and gave him three cheers! The whole agitation really proceeds from the belief that the use of alcoholic liquor is in itself a sin.

The following are the questions sent by our author to every workhouse in the country: (1) Has the supply of beer for your work-

house been discontinued and for how long? (2) What substitute? (3) Results? I quote some of the answers (as before stated he gives no replies from any but teetotal workhouses). Brackley, (*a*) ten years ago, (*b*) *water*, (*c*) quite satisfactory. (Yes; but satisfactory to whom?) Inverness, ten years, *nothing*, no difference. (I would remark that in the list of substitutes given for beer, 'water' and 'nothing' are tabulated separately, so there are apparently workhouses where the poor may not even moisten their lips with a drink of cold water on Christmas Day. At Ballymena again we find 'no drink of any kind supplied' in answer to the question as to 'substitutes.') Llanfyllie (*a*) discontinued many years, (*b*) water, (*c*) no complaints. (What good would it do for the victim to complain.) Bainbridge, water; Jedburgh, water; Salford, water; Gainsborough, neither beer nor any substitute, water excepted!

So the tale goes on, and year by year the inmates of new workhouses are sentenced on Christmas day to this watery doom. These victims of fanaticism enjoy the beer itself, but I believe that at bottom they value it more as a recognition that they are

not a class apart, but that as human beings they have their share in the great loving cup, the universal symbol of good fellowship and good will. Wine is such a symbol, let the temperance fanatics say what they will, and the Patriarch Noah who planted the vine was a true Archfather of mankind.

In the ideal almshouse (say, East Grinstead where Dr Neale was warden) I think at Christmas a great loving cup should go round with silver saints upon it, filled with good old ale with brown toasts and sprigs of rosemary and roast crab-apples floating in it. No gramophone would be heard there, but the carols of old time. It is as difficult to imagine Christmas carols in these watery workhouses as it is to think of a sculptured tree of Jesse flourishing on their outer walls. As a Sussex man I am pleased to see that the country round East Grinstead is the blackest spot in the 'Workhouse Temperance Map of England.' God bless the Kent and Sussex Guardians for their reasonable kindness, and God help all poor souls who will sit this Christmas Eve by workhouse yule logs!

ARTS AND MYSTERIES

It recently fell to my lot to read with some children, by way of a French lesson, a passage describing the various shops in the streets of a country town. One could not help reflecting on the number of arts and mysteries which to-day for all practical purposes have vanished from the world, and how the reign of machinery has impoverished not only language, but life itself, for the people of this latter time. We could translate the craftsmen's names in our French lesson, but many of the words called up no sensible image, brought nothing definite and concrete to our minds. A 'serrurier' is, of course, a 'locksmith,' but who nowadays has ever seen a locksmith at work? A 'glover' is even to us as a 'gantier,' that is, a word of which we know the bare meaning, but of which our minds have no immediate apprehension. One told them that a 'teinturier'

was a 'dyer'; but the word left them blank. For them 'the dyer' was not a picturesque figure, kindly or churlish, at the corner of the street. The teacher had to make a mental effort to realise that the art was an operation carried on at the Perth Dye Works. Yet the dyer was for centuries a familiar figure everywhere, and the name is a common surname in all European tongues. 'Tintoretto,' the name of the glorious Venetian, is, of course, 'the little dyer.' St Catherine of Siena's father was a 'tintore.' The boy Shakespeare, whose keen eyes took in everything, must often have watched the dyer at work :—

> My nature is subdued
> To what it works in, like a dyer's hand

he afterwards wrote. But the dyer is now the shadow of a name; he has gone from the world; he is no more watched by the big eyes of curious children as he cleans a piece of velvet over a pan of charcoal.

To see things made, to watch the shapeless material being fashioned by the craftsman into some thing of beauty and familiar use, is always a delight to children. Especially it would seem to have formed part of the education of the old-time poets as they learned their craft and mystery. How they delighted in the names of common things, the carpenter's

tools, the different parts of the rigging of a ship! Dante, Shakespeare, the old ballads, are full of these things. The craftsmen themselves are figures that continually appear in the literature of the Middle Ages :—

> Daughter, it's the carpenter,
> Mending planks upon the stair.

This is a great note of 'romantic' art and literature. One of the first fruits of the Romantic Movement was the recovery of all this lost inheritance, after the unutterable dreariness of classicism, untouched by any sound of the real living world, or breath of the wholesome air of every day. The Romantic writers had only to write as the people were talking all around them. However colourless the literary vocabulary might have become, the popular speech had never done so. The people always working at their trades, and seeing other craftsmen at work, making and mending and adorning all sorts of things, tailors and carpenters, blacksmiths and whitesmiths, cobblers and scissor grinders, drew as many images and similes from these things as Dante himself. At the present day the word 'whitesmith,' for instance is a shadow without substance. The process goes on, and more and more things are made and done by who knows what in-

human machines, by what dreary 'appliances' in what barrack factories and deadly 'works.' Things come to us from distant impersonal 'stores.' We live in a world of the 'ready made.' I here lay down my pen and glance at to-days 'Times.' The first thing my eye lights upon is a really jubilant half-column headed 'The Passing of the Lamplighter.' The writer says: 'The old method of lighting and extinguishing street lamps by hand is at best a crude method of doing the work, and compares very unfavourably with the ease of manipulation which characterises electric light. Many attempts have from time to time been made to dispense with the lamplighter, but he remains a familiar figure in our streets. . . . An apparatus invented by Dr Rostin at last promises to attain the object.' He discusses another method which would only secure the partial, not the total abolition of the lamplighter, nothing less than which will content him. 'Delenda est Carthago.' He ends by prophesying—alas! probably only too truly—the speedy and universal adoption of the Rostin method. Once again an apparatus is to be substituted for a person. It is difficult to imagine the state of mind which finds this matter for rejoicing. This is the way to rob the common life of all

interest and variety and romance, and one would imagine, to diffuse among the mass of the people a general imbecility. One remembers one's own childhood, the eager watching for the advent of the figure with the long pole, and the appearance of the twinkling spark at the top of the lamp-post, and one thinks of Stevenson's poem about the child who would not go to bed till he had seen the lamplighter on his rounds :—

Oh ! Leary, see a little child and nod to him to-night.

Twentieth century children will have no such things to remember.

The kings of all craftsmen who ever worked were no doubt the great painters who painted sacred pictures for the whole people in the age and atmosphere of faith.

Hans Memmeling and Jan Van Eyck
Keep state at Bruges. In sore shame
I scanned the works that bear their name,

cried the poet painter of a far other day. One can, indeed imagine no further human happiness, no nobler human destiny, than to have been the painter of 'St Ursula,' or the 'Adoration of the Lamb.'

The Russian icon-maker is a sacred craftsman, far below these great creative heights indeed, who still lives and works at this very day. He paints the saints by an immutable

tradition, which prescribes what every detail of their guesture and dress must be. For instance, in pictures of the Council of Nicea, St Nicholas of Myra must be painted without his mitre, because at that assembly he struck Arius in the face. A bishop must be 'no striker,' St Paul tells us. In old England the sign-painter was often literally a painter of sacred pictures. In the sign of the 'Crispin and Crispinian,' at Strood, after at least five centuries, the holy Martyrs of Soissons may still be dimly seen, cutting leather and clouting shoes.

Two métiers, above all, belong to the world of romance, those of the miller and the blacksmith. These are personages of Grimm and Hans Andersen, of folk-tales, fairy tales, nursery rhymes, of ballad poetry and saintly legend. One thinks of the Marquis of Carabas, of St Dunstan and St Eloi. It is hard to say which is the most delightful sight, a windmill turning in the brisk March morning, or the glow of a blacksmith's forge, as the children are coming out of school, at twilight in the village street. Small boys delight to see the bellows plied, and the fire leap into clear rejoicing flame, to see the shower of sparks fly up from the hot iron, to assist at the mysteries of the shoeing of a

horse. The farrier's quick ear tells by the first hint of a difference in the sound if he is driving the nail beyond the hoof; if so, he draws it out at once, and slightly bends the point. Horses, at any rate, must always be shod on the spot. But the miller, as our fathers knew him, is passing from us. One almost never sees a windmill turning. They stand up in the landscape, gaunt and dead. One thinks of the time when they were alive, of the great circles of the sails,

> The meal sacks on the whitened floor,
> The dark round of the dripping wheel,
> The very air about the door
> Made misty with the floating meal.

The English language is full of proverbs like 'bringing grist to the mill,' coming from these brisk and cheery things.

The cobbler is another figure who plays a great part in folk-lore and nursery rhymes:

> Cobbler, cobbler, mend my shoe,
> Get it done by half-past two.

our old rhyme runs, and the words are accompanied by the gesture of the long drawing out of the needle and thread. The *sabotier*, the wandering maker of sabots, may still be seen in Brittany. In a wood outside the town he 'chooses a tree,' like the idol-maker in the Bible, he cuts it down, and as he converts

it into wooden shoes, he sings at his worl

All these things belong to a time whe work was human and personal. In thos days nothing was mechanical, everythin was humanised and personified. This i seen in the old-time technical names of thing which still survive in various trades. Fo instance, in the roof, say, of a barn, th support under the ridge which connects th collar-beam with the tie-beam, if it is in th centre, is called by builders a 'king post If there are two posts, one at each side, the are 'queen posts.' The smaller additiona supports, if they are attendant upon a 'king are called 'princes,' if upon a 'queen 'princesses.' This is the touch of poetry the play of fancy that fades from the worl to-day. The age of machines and appliances of factories and stores, robs the worker o pleasure in his work, and hides reality an truth from the eyes of numbers who no only never make anything themselves, bu have no notion how the things they use ar made. 'I am going to get the carpenter t make a garden seat to put here,' said a frien of mine to a lady as they paced the wal together. 'Oh! does the carpenter mak garden seats?' was the reply. 'I thoug they came up from the stores.'

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